NEW ACQUISITIONS

AUTUMN 2023

JACARANDA

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ART AND ANTIQUES FROM AFRICA, OCEANIA AND THE AMERICAS

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NEW ACQUISITIONS

AUTUMN 2023

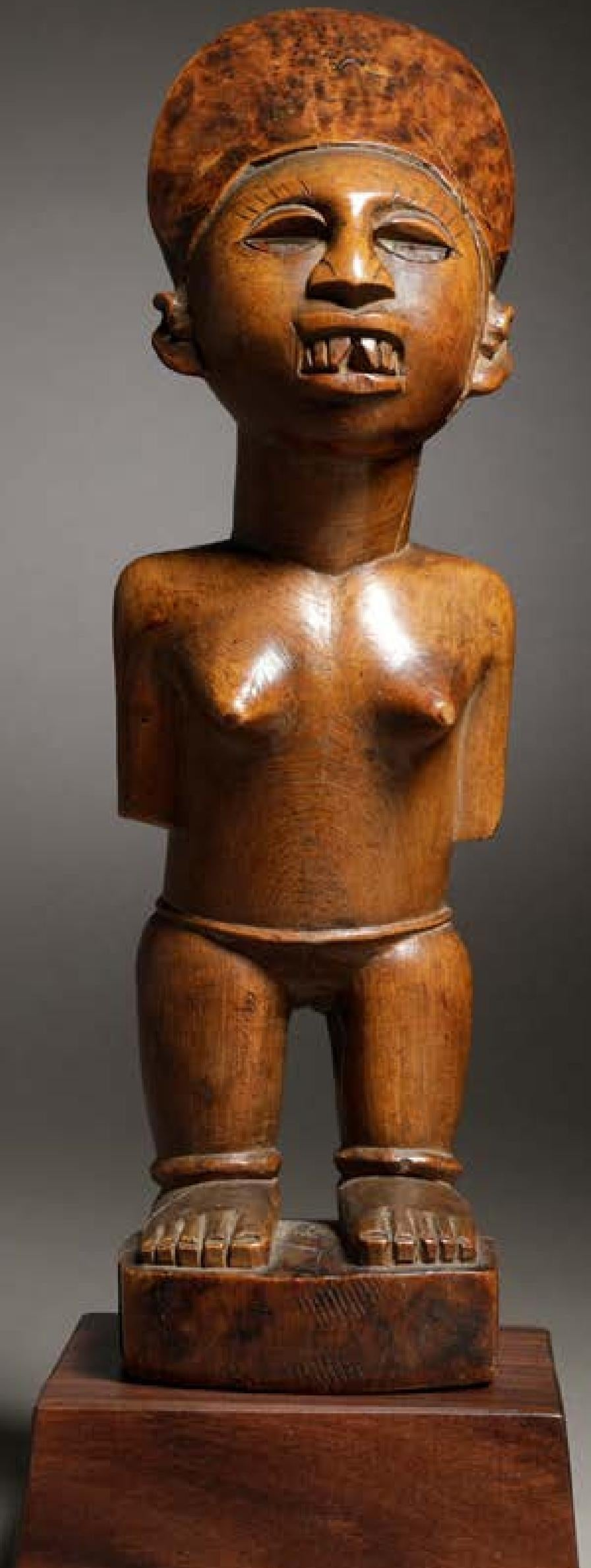
We are delighted to present our *New Acquisitions* for Autumn 2023.

Our online exhibition showcases African masks and figures from the Constance McCormick Fearing collection. Beginning in the 1950's, McCormick Fearing formed an exceptional collection of masterpieces from Pre-Columbian, African, and Asian art traditions, all housed on her vast estate in Montecito, California. McCormick Fearing was a descendant of the McCormick Harvesting Machine dynasty. Her grandfather, Cyrus Hall McCormick, invented the mechanical reaper, a device that transformed agriculture in the United States.

Other highlights include a striking Senufo female figure, two exceptional Bundu helmet masks, a 19th-century Yu'pik lute, and a beautifully crafted Alaskan child's doll. We are always thrilled by the discovery of new objects from diverse cultures and hope that you will enjoy this selection.

We have recently returned from Paris, where we had the pleasure of witnessing the impressive turnout for Parcours des Mondes. The energy was palpable, and it is always a joy to be in the company of fellow art enthusiasts.

Dori & Daniel Rootenberg
NEW YORK CITY, OCTOBER 2023



1

FEMALE FIGURE

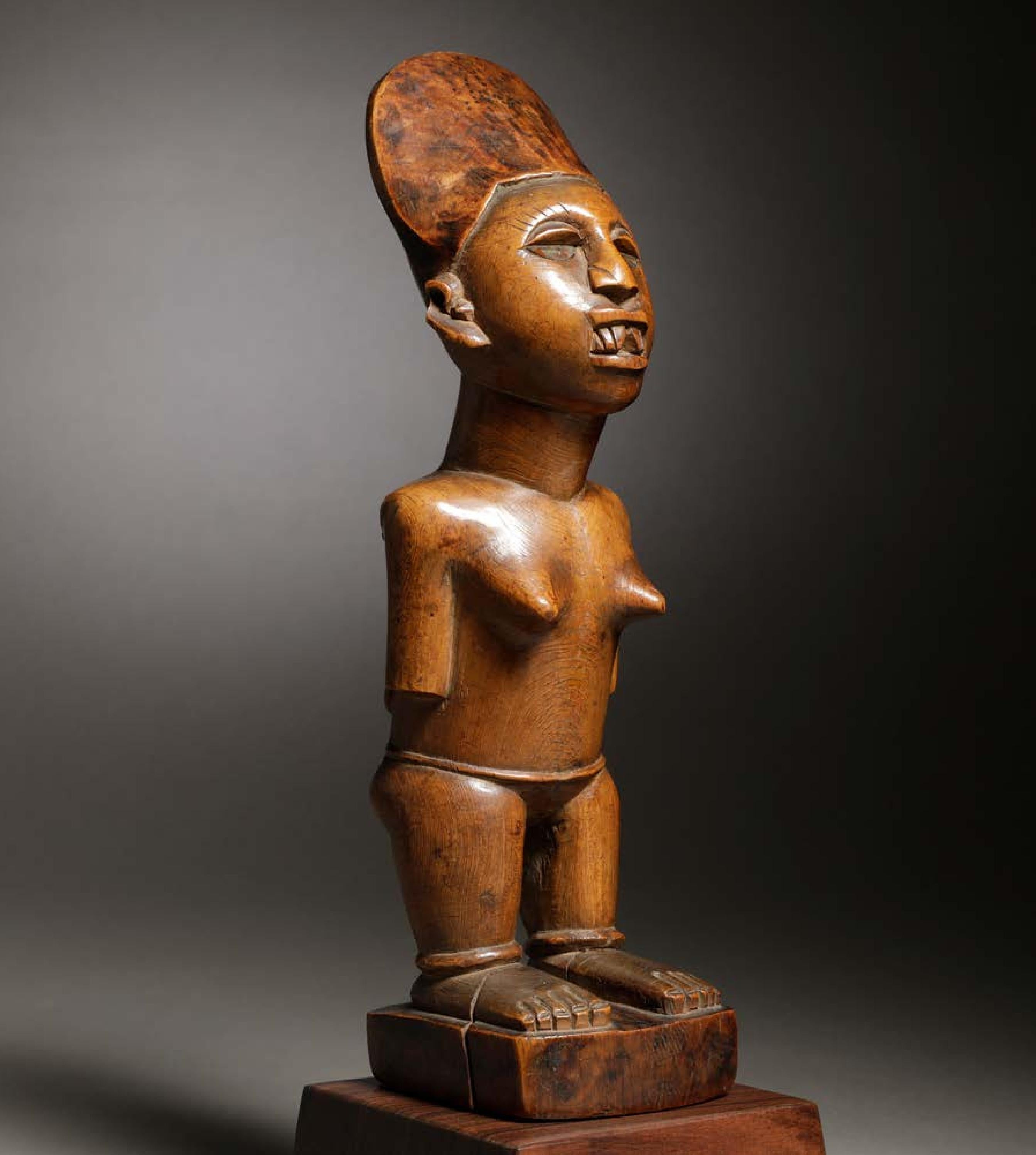
KONGO-YOMBE, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

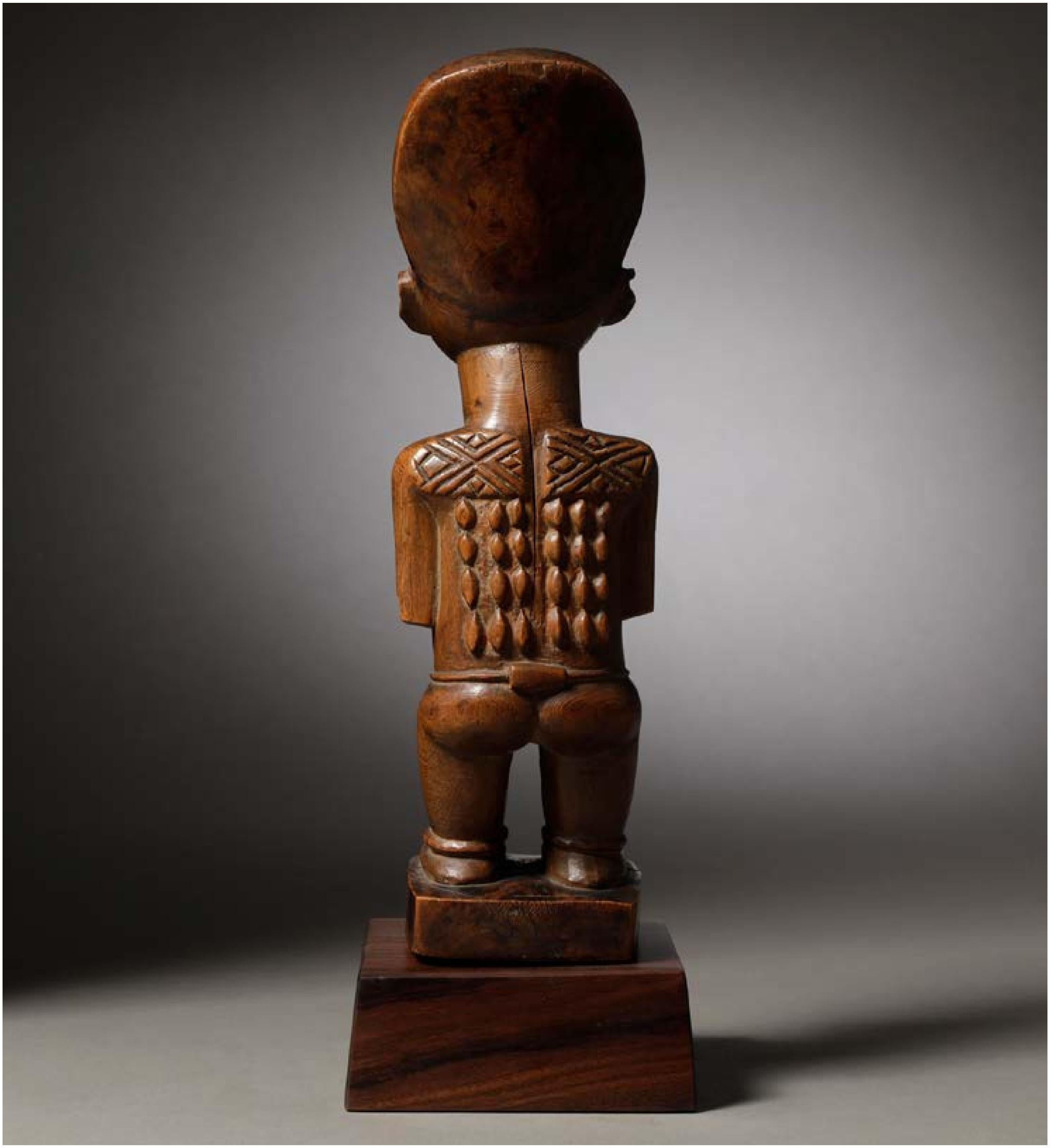
Late 19th / early 20th century
Wood, glass
Height: 10 in

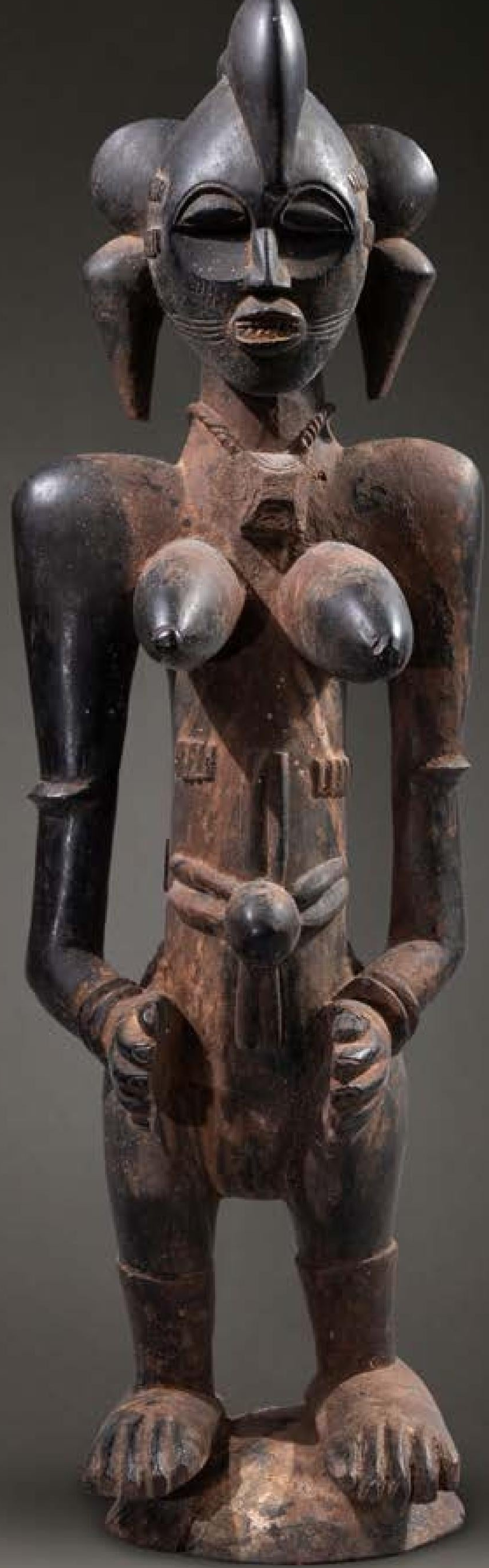
PROVENANCE

Constance McCormick Fearing (1926 – 2019), Montecito, California. McCormick Fearing was an heiress to the McCormick fortune. Her family founded the McCormick Harvesting Machine Company, which later became part of the International Harvester Company. Cyrus McCormick was credited as the inventor of the first mechanical reaper.

Female figures are prominent in the Yombe carving tradition, with *phemba* maternity images being perhaps the most well-recognized. Their graceful and reverential aura reflects the esteem in which women were historically held in the matrilineal societies of the Kongo. The present figure shows characteristics that suggest associations with *phemba* carving – the high cap, which tells of aristocratic status, as well as the inlaid glass eyes and smooth and sensitive carving of the body – but the absence of a child figure, along with its standing posture, makes its typology uncertain. Truncation of the lower arms is likely due to the midsection of the figure having once been covered by fabric or some other accouterment. A noticeably darker patina is found at the feet, indicating most of the figure may originally have been clothed or otherwise covered.







2

STANDING FEMALE FIGURE

SENUFO, IVORY COAST

Late 19th/early 20th century
Wood, pigments
Height: 26 in

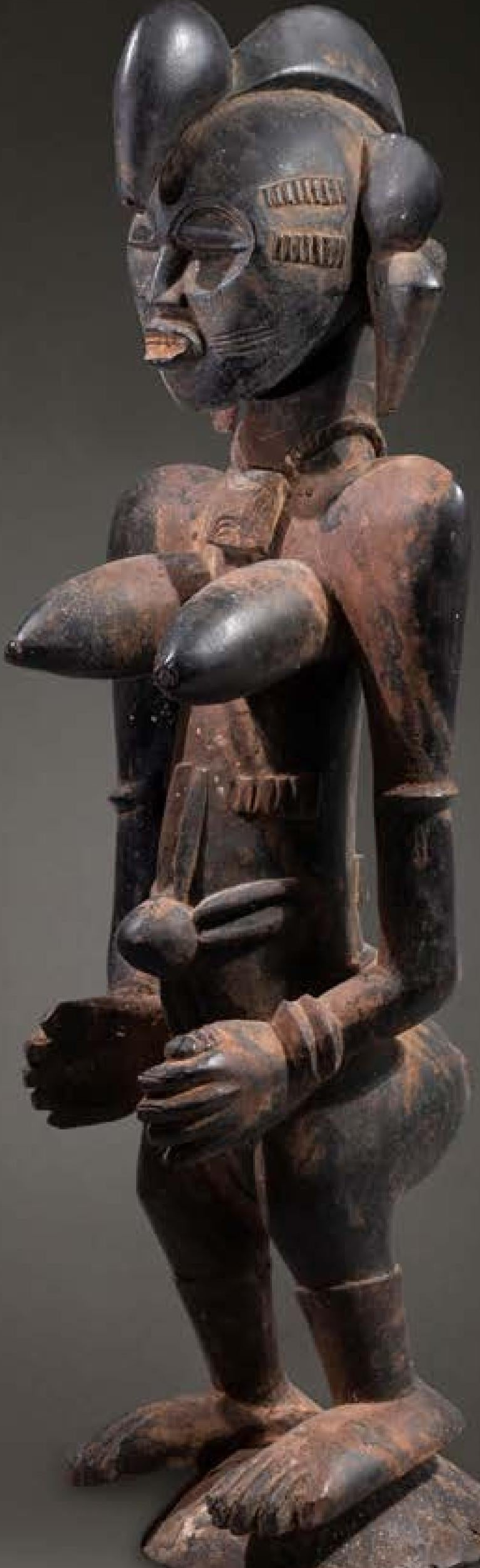
PROVENANCE
Patrick Girard, Lyon, France
Private collection, Belgium

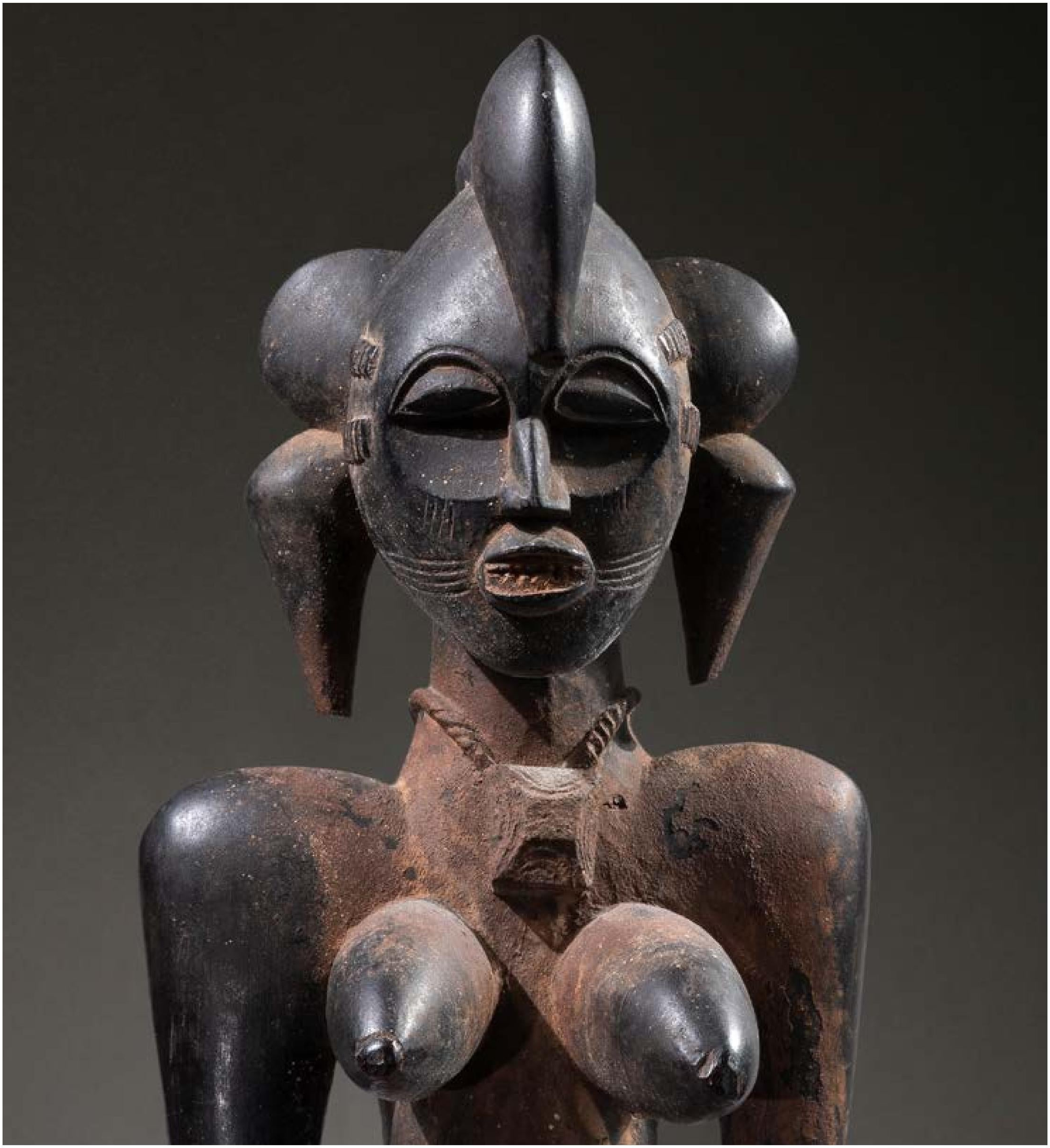
EXHIBITION HISTORY
Maastricht, The Netherlands: 'TEFAF', Maastricht Exhibition and Congress Center (MECC), 16–24 March 2019 (Galerie Bernard Dulon)

The physical and spiritual life of Senufo communities is safeguarded by the men's *poro* society and the women's *sandogo* society. These associations govern behavioral norms, beliefs, and a variety of important age-grade initiation rites, all part of the ongoing work that serves 'Old Mother,' the female aspect of the supreme deity. Masks, figures, costumes, and regalia are abundant in *poro* and *sandogo* activities, such that a large part of the artistic output of the Senufo is attributed to them.

Divination is another significant function of *poro*, carried out by senior members of the association. Large male and female spirit figures (*ndebele,* sing. *ndeo*) are obtained for their altars, the female often standing taller than the male – a common pattern in Senufo art that honors the woman as the protector and ancestral progenitor of *poro* initiates. The beauty of altar figures reflects the prestige and skill of the diviner and has an attractive effect upon the spirits to which the practitioner appeals.

This fine female *ndeo* projects a strong and almost resplendent power. Its massive shoulders, multi-lobed coiffure, firm stance, severe visage, and projecting breasts and umbilicus combine to dramatic effect in an embodiment of maternal authority. Defined by a forceful interplay of large, echoing columnar and protuberant shapes, the figure also shows more delicate relief-carved details, with scarification designs decorating the face, torso, and buttocks, and an amulet-like necklace draped around the neck.





3

CANOE SPLASHBOARD *LAGIM*

MASSIM, NEW GUINEA

19th century

Wood

Width: 21 in

PROVENANCE

Sotheby's, London, 24 June 1992, lot 25

Bonhams, London, 30 November 2000, lot 183

Peter Adler, London

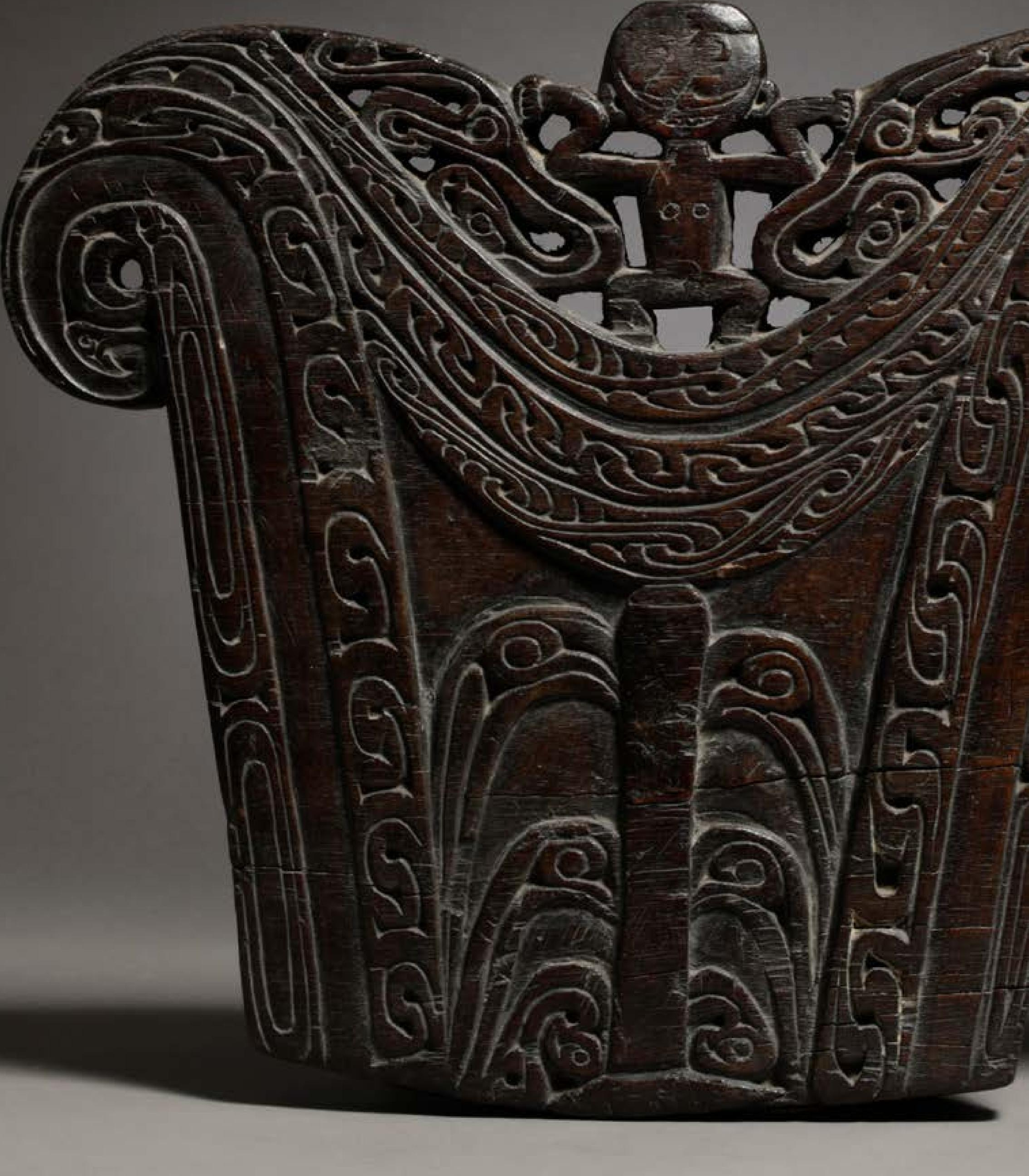
Seymour Lazar, Palm Springs, acquired from the above in 2005

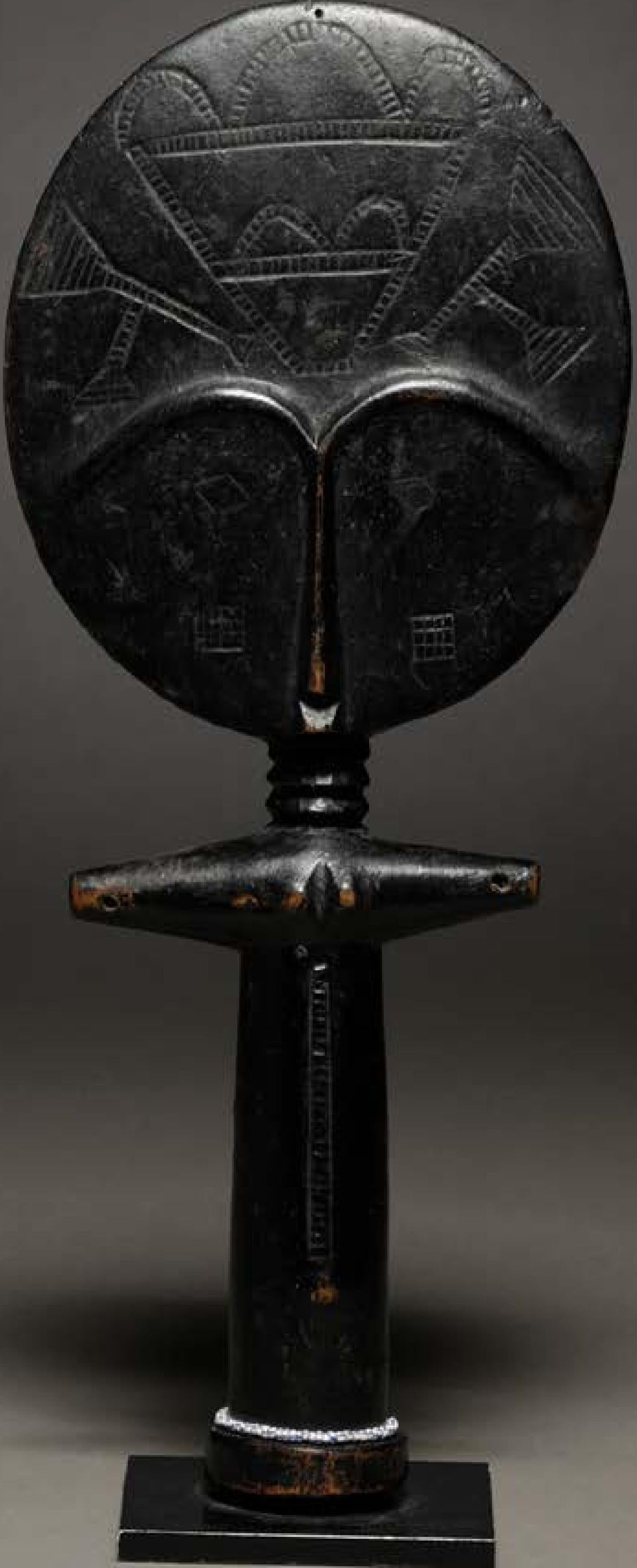
Since ancient times, the Massim island groups of southeast Papua New Guinea have practiced the tradition of Kula, an ongoing, ceremonial exchange of valuables between islands both neighboring and distant. This process of exchange centers upon armbands made of conus shells and necklaces of red spondylus shells, and for these treasures rowers launch out into the open ocean in canoes lavished with decorative carvings. The acquisition of Kula valuables is a prestigious and desirable deed, and highly successful participants achieve considerable fame and status. The objects themselves also enjoy great renown, with names and biographies that detail their journeys around the islands of the Massim.

One of the primary decorative elements of the Kula canoe is the splashboard (*lagim*), which stands at both ends of the boat. These represent some of the most iconic and impressive of Massim carvings, cut with mesmerizing curvilinear motifs and imbued with extensive magical iconography pertaining to the Kula voyage. Beautifully carved canoes are believed to cast a kind of enchantment over their receiving hosts, moving them to surrender their most precious Kula treasures.

Carvers of splashboards are apprenticed from an early age, initiated into the detailed knowledge of magic and taboo that gives their art its fundamental efficacy. The qualities of their carvings and the observation of the proper rituals surrounding them are of profound importance to the success of the canoe's voyages and the survival of its crew. Depictions of ocean spirits, both salvific and destructive, take a prominent place at the center of the board between surging volutes. Highly abstract bird motifs representing sea eagles are also worked profusely through splashboard compositions. These symbolize the keen 'hunters' of Kula treasure, diving to claim their metaphorical prey. Carvers of these powerful works were not allowed to draw their designs beforehand and executed them directly into the wood, proving their depth of ancestral knowledge and mastery of their art.

To the lower section of the splashboard would be connected a smaller, secondary prow board (*tabuyo*), similarly carved, which projects perpendicularly from the nose of the canoe, cutting through the waves.





4

FEMALE FIGURE *AKUABA*

ASANTE, GHANA

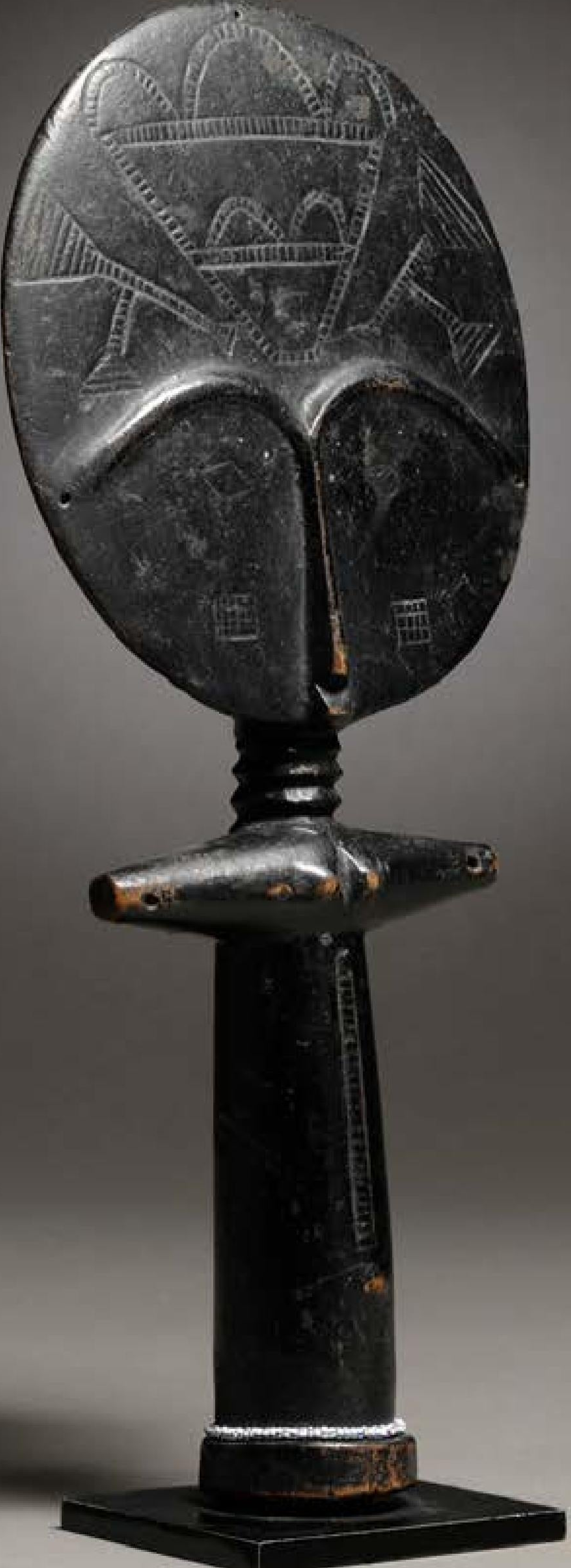
Late 19th / early 20th century
Wood, glass beads
Height: 12 in

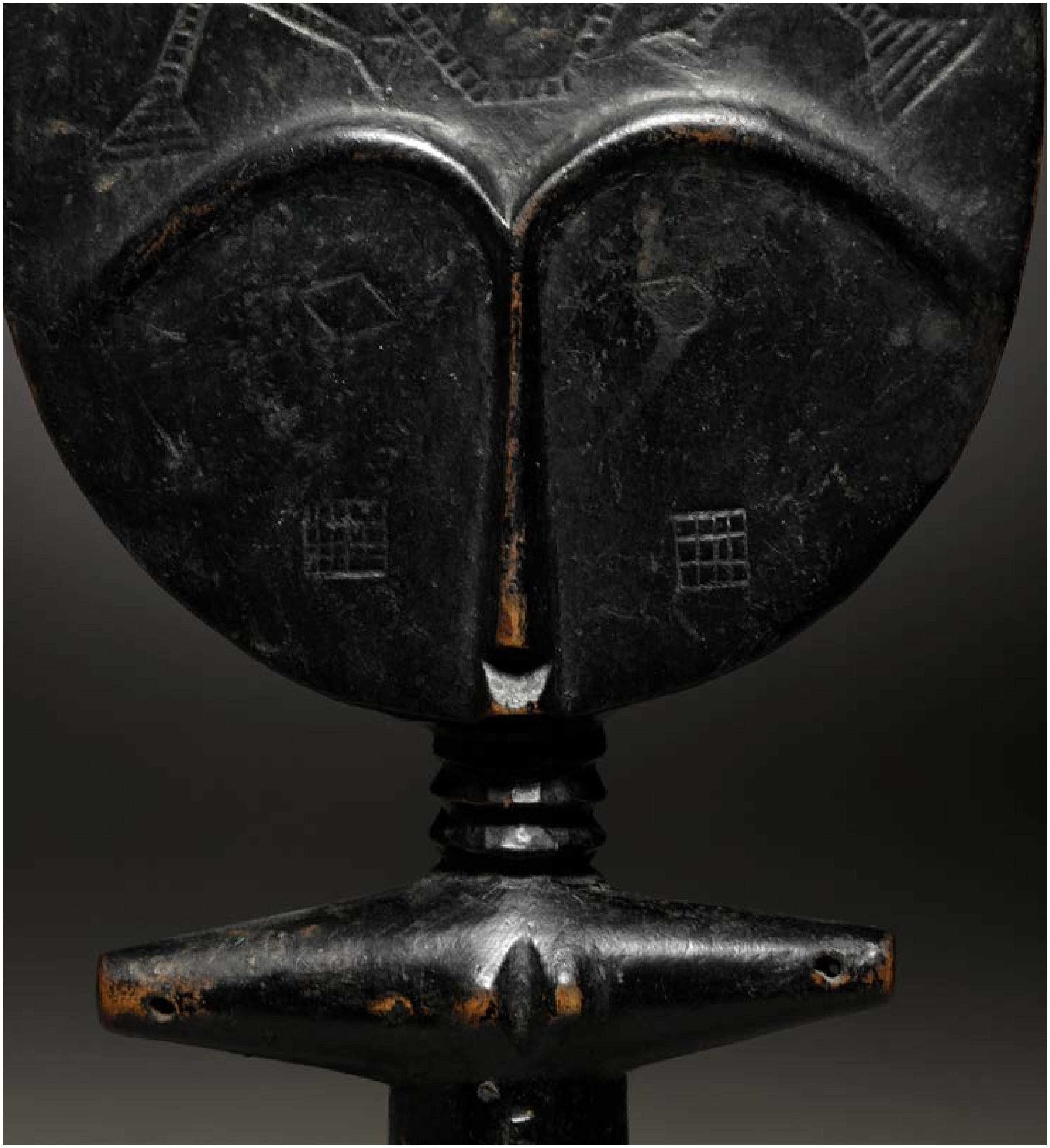
PROVENANCE
Aaron Furman Gallery, New York, 1969
Private Collection

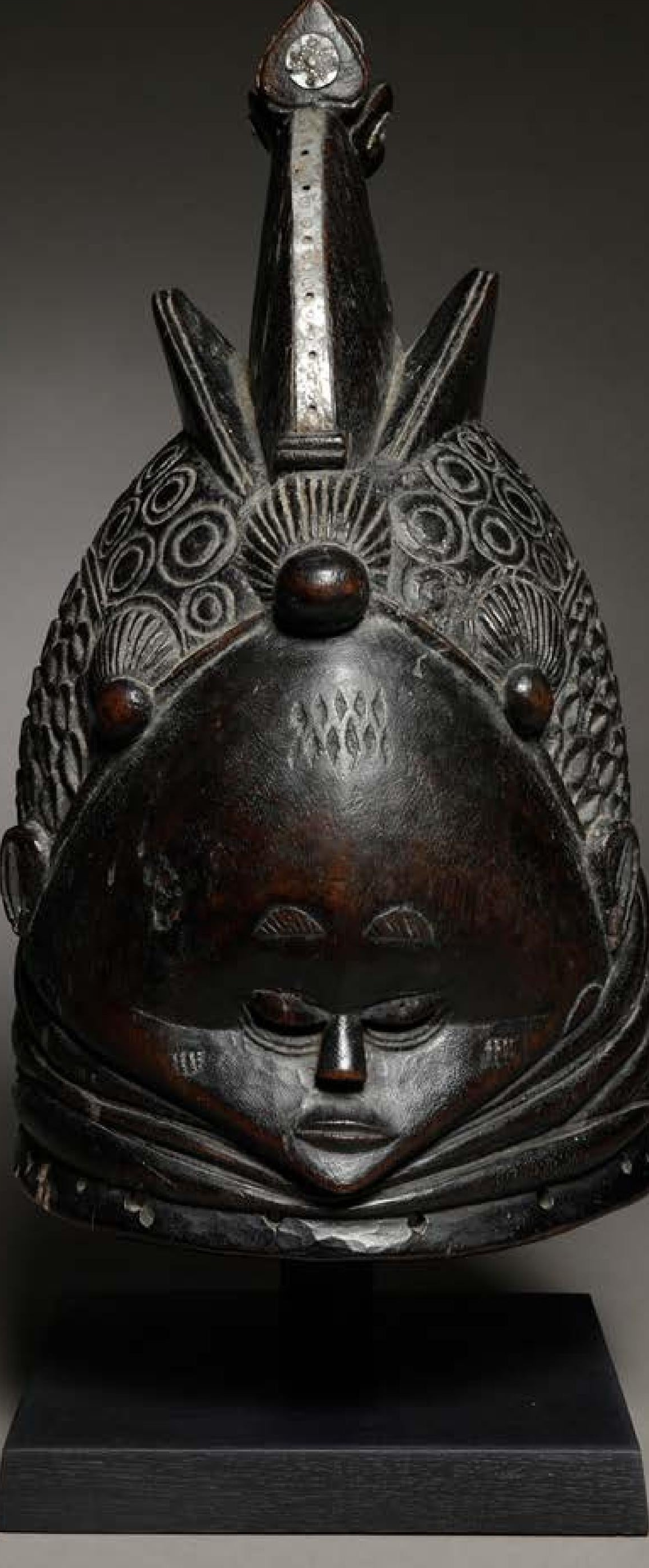
Disk-headed *akuaba* figures are perhaps one of the most iconic forms in the African figural corpus. They are ritually consecrated images that depict children and are carried by aspiring mothers who wish to overcome barrenness and conceive, aided by the power of community spirits. Their use arose out of an Akan legend about a woman named Akua who used such a figure for exactly this purpose. *Akuaba* ('Akua's child') are carried flat against the back, wrapped in skirts, exactly as a human child would be. After influencing a successful pregnancy, they are returned to shrines in testament to the spirits' power, or kept by the family as a reminder of their child.

The fine *akuaba* shown here displays all the classic characteristics of its type, with a wide disk head, arched eyebrows and nose in relief, horizontal arms, and a cylindrical torso. The flat surface of the facial disk, which suggests the flattening performed upon Akan children's foreheads by the gentle modeling of the infant's soft cranial bones, is carefully decorated with a group of lightly incised designs. A ridged neck – another Akan beauty ideal – communicates robust health. Small, close-set breasts identify the figure as female. This is in keeping with all genuine *akuaba,* girls being the preferred outcome for a birth in the matrilineal society of the Akan.

Holes pierced at the ends of the arms likely once held pendant beads or other adornments similar to the string of tiny beads that encircle the base of the figure.







5

HELMET MASK

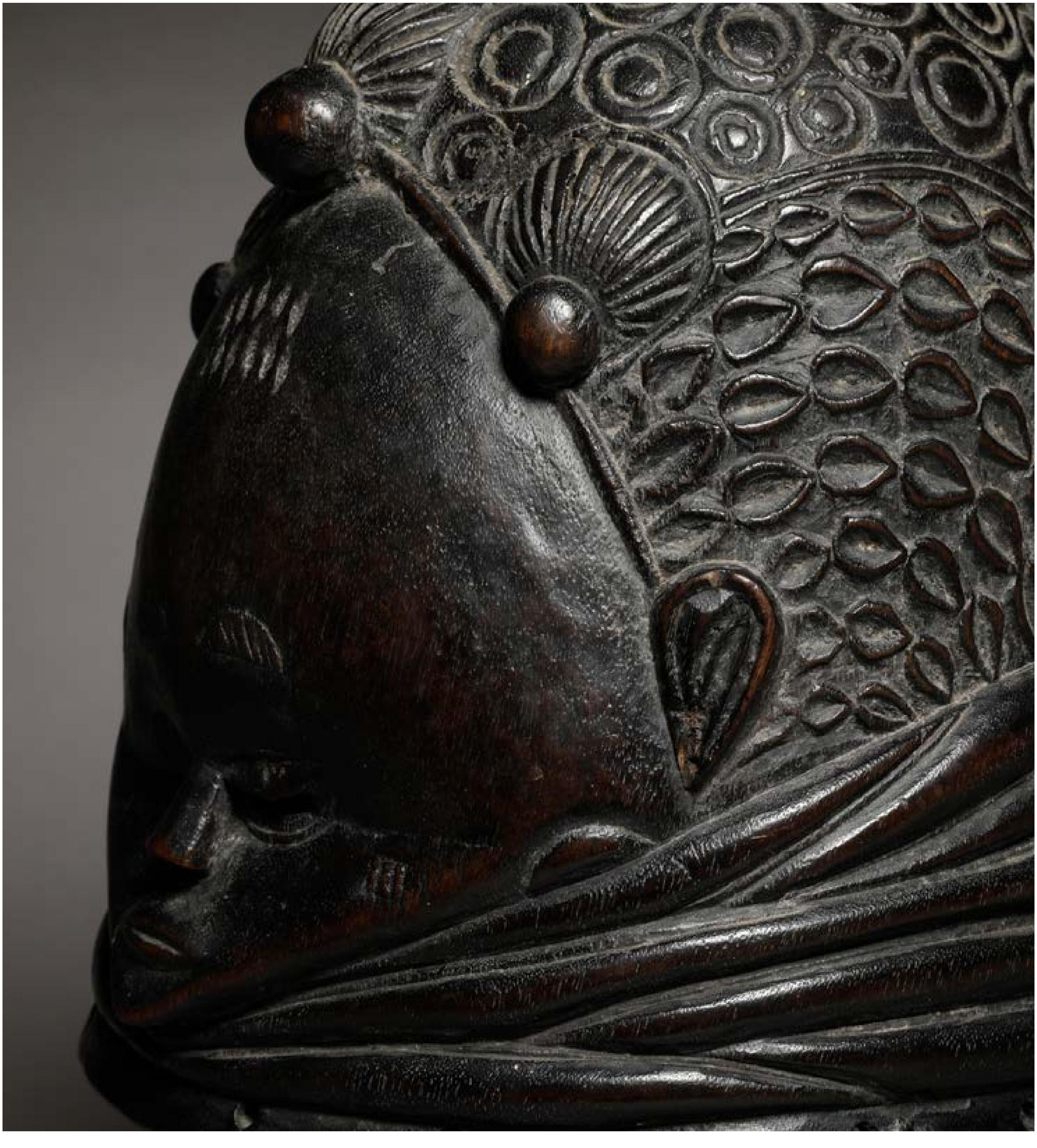
MENDE, SIERRA LEONE

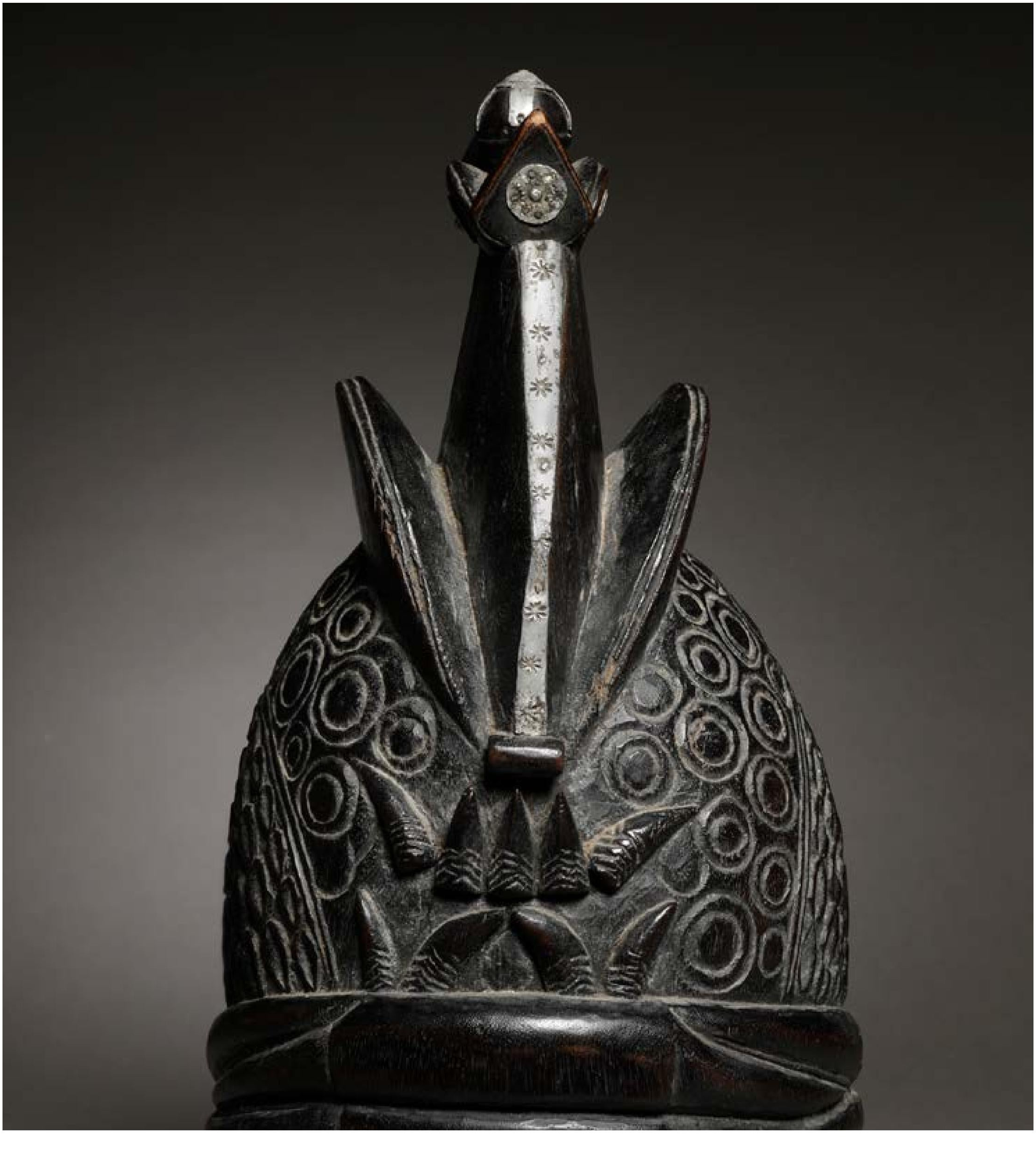
Early 20th century
Wood, aluminum
Height: 15 in

PROVENANCE
Wright Saltus Ludington (1900–1992), Santa Barbara, California. Ludington was a major art collector and artist and was instrumental in the formation of the Santa Barbara Museum of Art.

Mende society is governed by a number of esoteric associations, foremost among which are the Sande women's society and Poro men's society. Both prepare young initiates for adulthood and make extensive use of masking. The helmet mask presented here, known as *ndoli*, represents a Sande guardian spirit. From generation to generation, such masks served to induct the new adults of the tribe into the next chapter of their lives, welcoming them to fully embrace the knowledge and lineage of their ancestors.

This *ndoli* shows a small, meditative face below a smooth and outsized brow marked with light diamond incisions, its chin overlapping bunched neck rings. An elaborate coiffure is rendered with a host of stunning shell-like motifs in relief, with bosses and scallop-shaped medallions adorning the browline. A dramatic, tripartite peak, highlighted with metal applications, confers a crown-like impression that is characteristic of these masks.





6

MATERNITY FIGURE

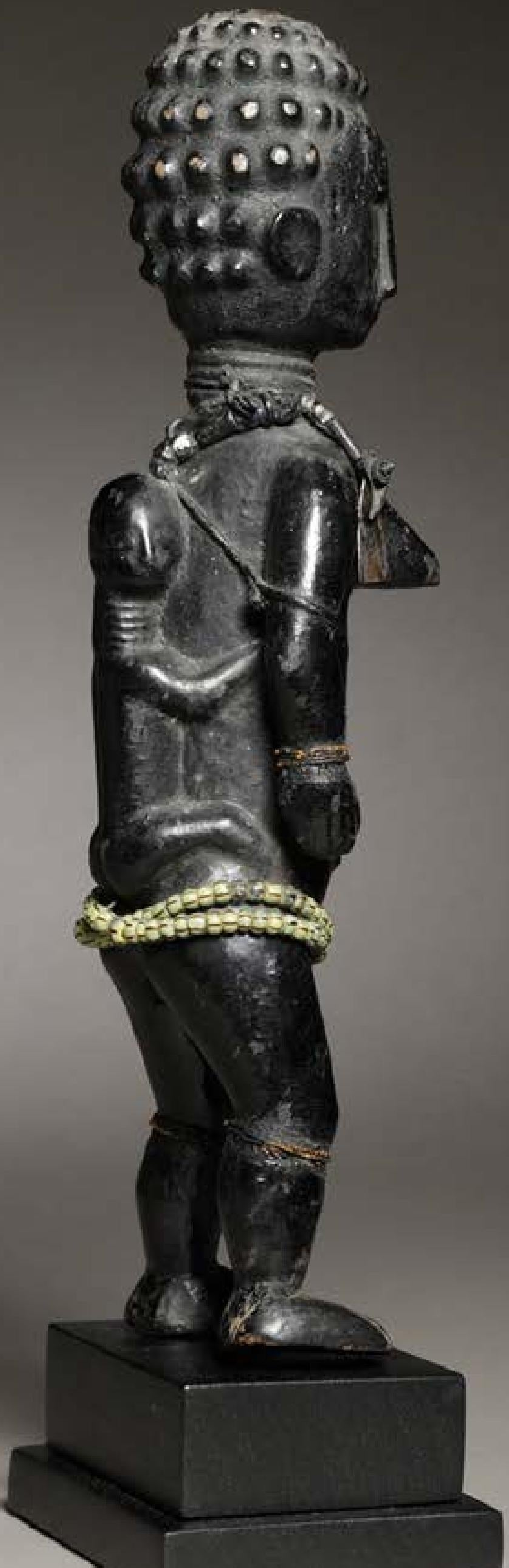
ANYI, IVORY COAST

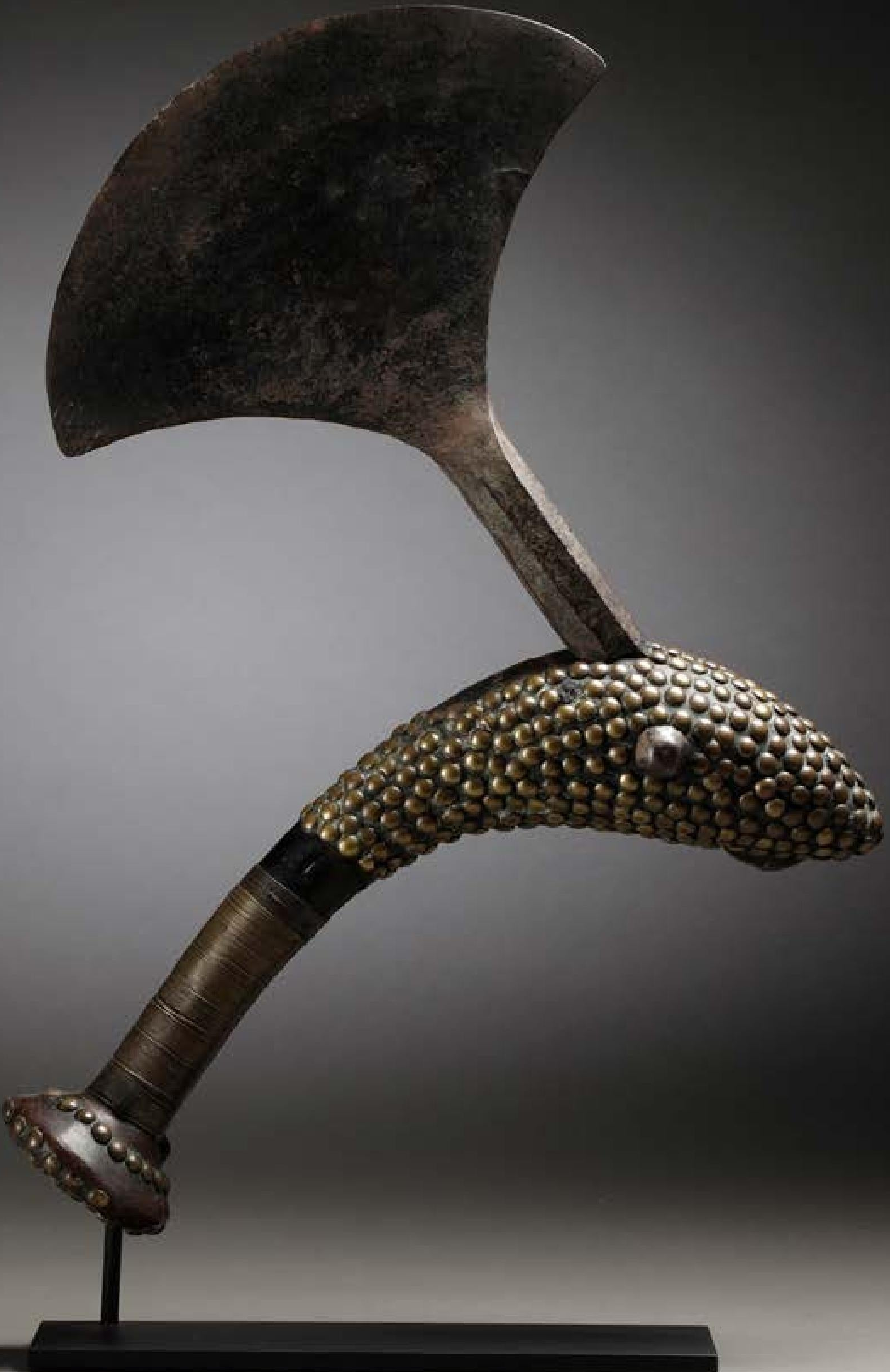
Late 19th / early 20th century
Wood, beads, metal, animal claw
Height: 12 ½ in

PROVENANCE

Constance McCormick Fearing (1926–2019), Montecito, California. McCormick Fearing was an heiress to the McCormick fortune. Her family founded the McCormick Harvesting Machine Company, which later became part of the International Harvester Company. Cyrus McCormick was credited as the inventor of the first mechanical reaper.

This standing female figure shows a smooth, vigorous body with robust limbs and a strong, wide stance, enhanced by a dramatic black patina. Prominent and projecting breasts, along with protruding umbilicus and torso scarifications, emphasize characteristics of womanhood and fecundity. The large, lozenge-shaped head is rendered in simple, quasi-abstract shapes, with an elongated nose and a coiffure arranged in rows of nodes. Adornments encircle the neck, elbows, and wrists, and the waist is girdled with a string of glass beads.





7

PRESTIGE AXE

TEKE-LARI/LAALI, REPUBLIC OF CONGO

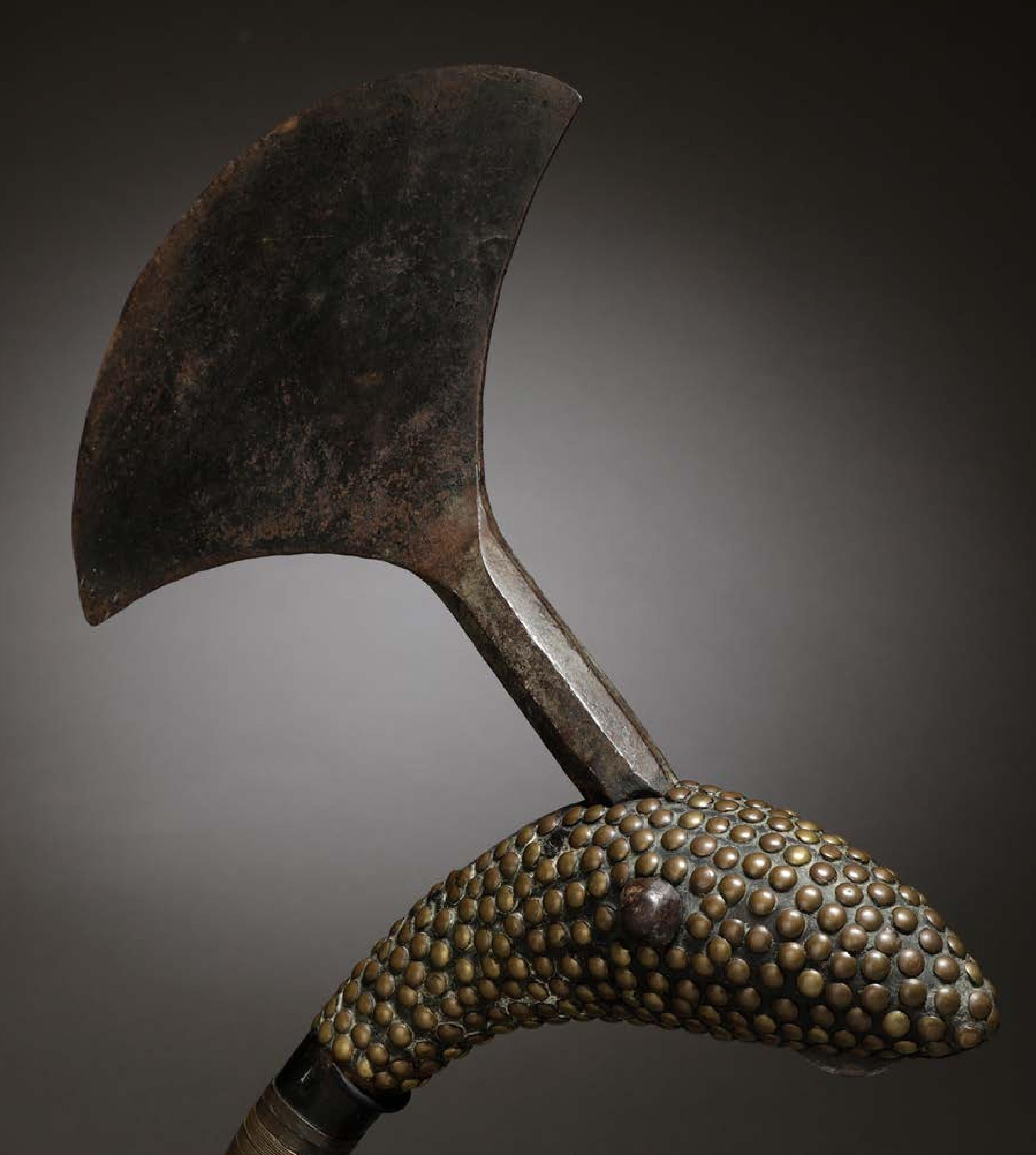
19th century
Wood, metal, brass tacks
Height: 17 in

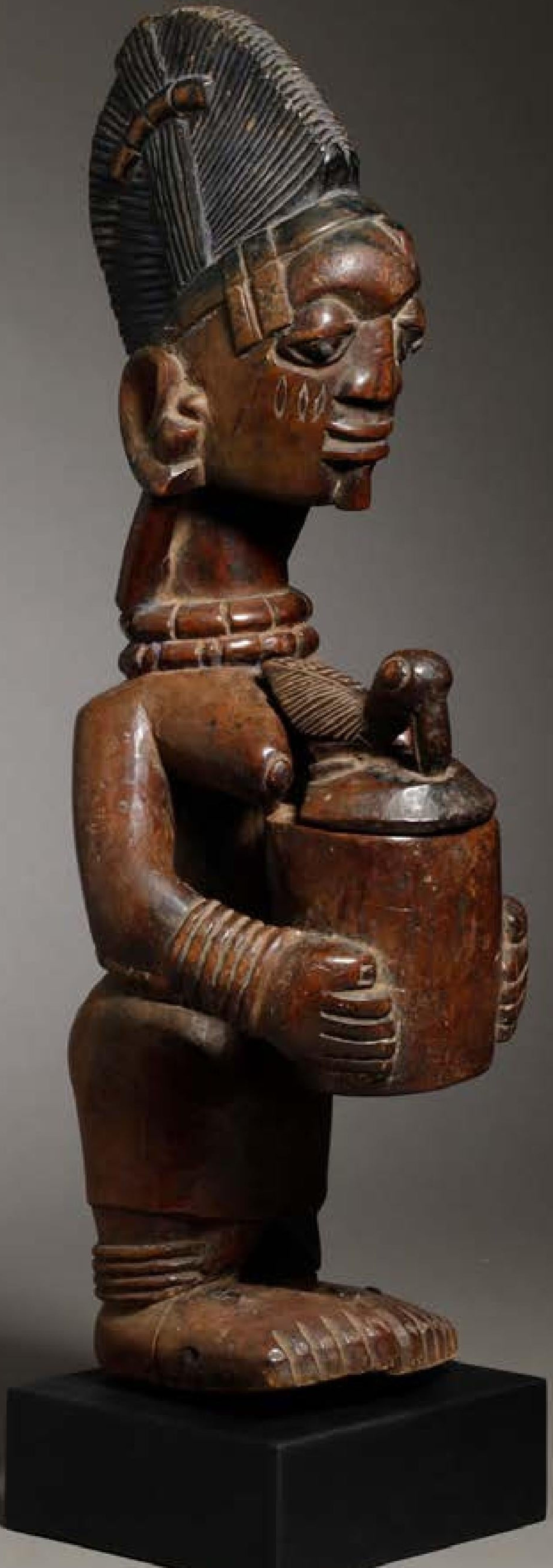
PROVENANCE
Private collection

In the hands of Téké, Mfinu and Laali chiefs, prestige axes are potent symbols of authority, projecting an aura of power both martial and personal. Their distinctive blades, with a broad face and linear connecting bar, are made of hammered iron, and their stout hilts of hardwood. Some axes feature finials in the forms of human heads at the blade junction; others show a back-curving, tapering, fish-like shape as seen here.

Metal details are plentiful and typical on these axes. This example is liberally adorned with brass furniture tacks acquired through European trade – an indicator of status – and its haft is wrapped tightly with brass wire. The dramatic fusion of curved and straight forms in the design of this axe, combined with its thickness and weight, suggests a marked impression of physical strength.

In *Iron and Pride* (2003), Jan Elsen writes about a similar axe from the collection of the Barbier-Mueller Museum: ‘Like the famous brass necklaces, the weapon is an integral part of the parade dress of chiefs. Contrary to what one might think, these axes give, once in hand, a feeling of ultimate swinging, they were certainly formidable weapons.’





8

FEMALE FIGURE WITH BOWL

YORUBA, NIGERIA

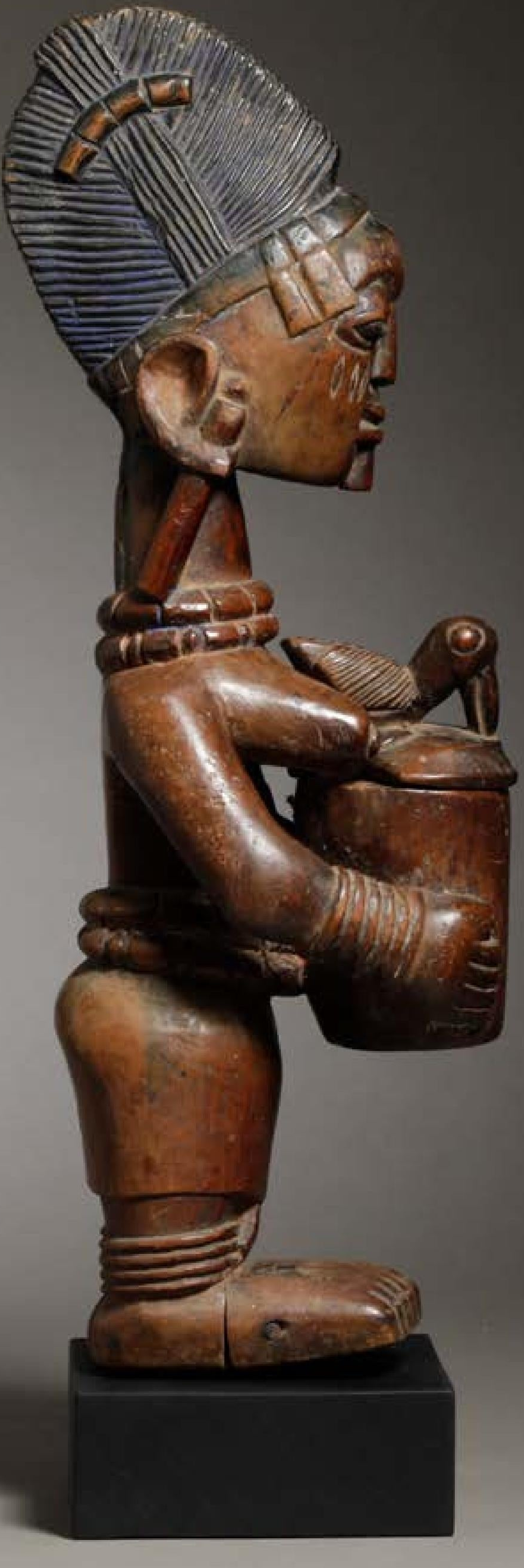
Late 19th / early 20th century
Wood, pigments, nails
Height: 21 in

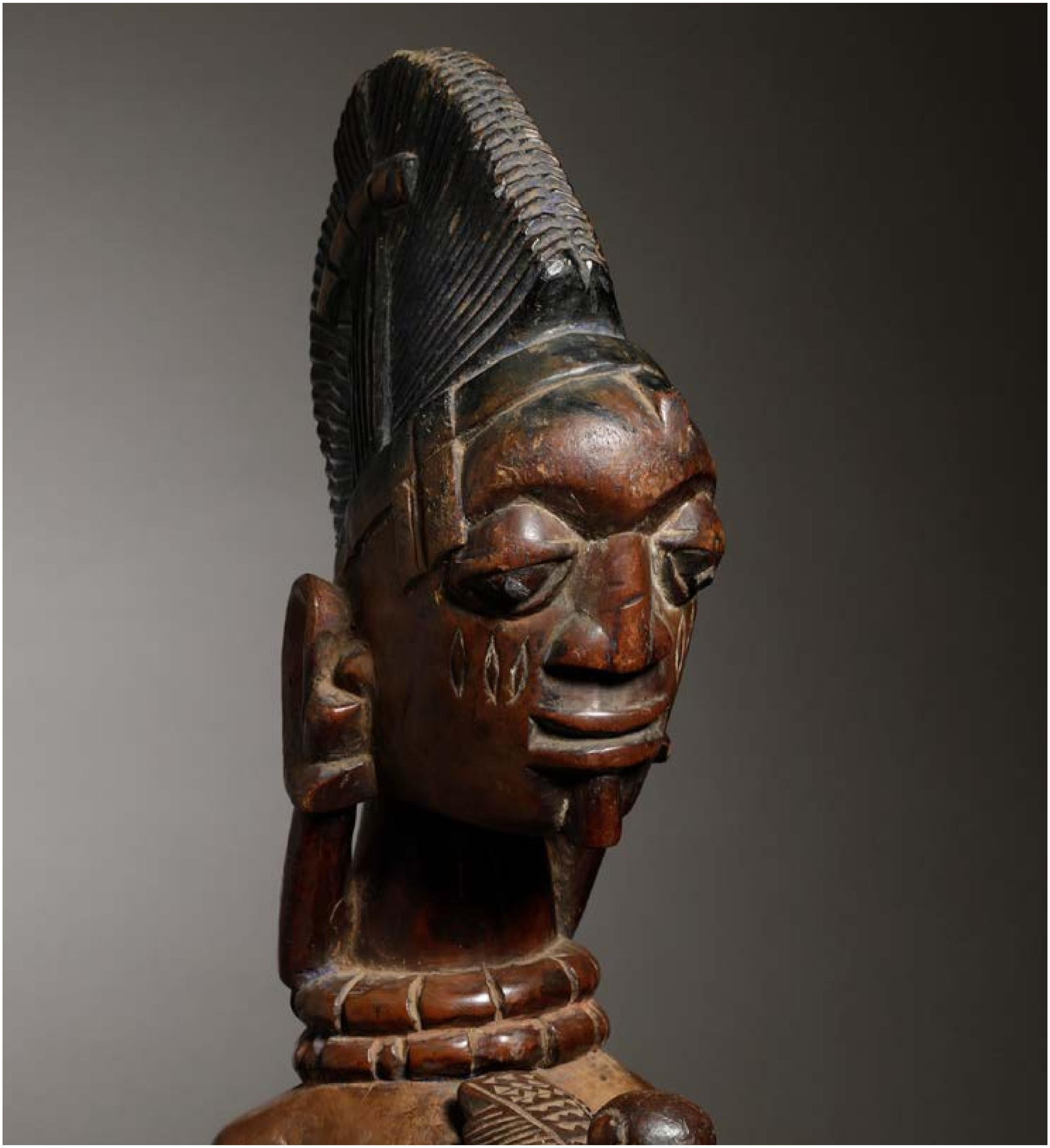
PROVENANCE

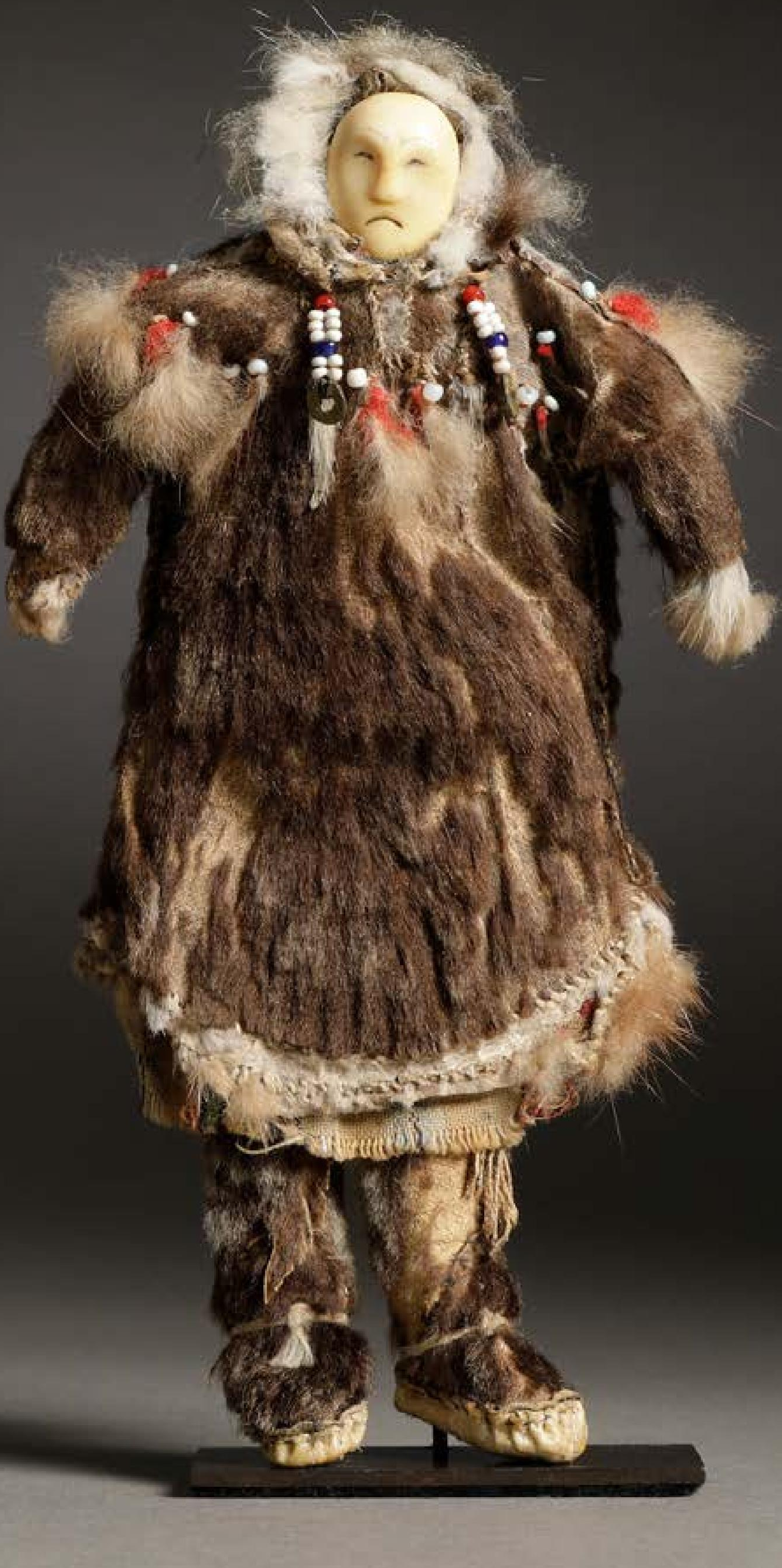
Constance McCormick Fearing (1926–2019), Montecito, California. McCormick Fearing was an heiress to the McCormick fortune. Her family founded the McCormick Harvesting Machine Company, which later became part of the International Harvester Company. Cyrus McCormick was credited as the inventor of the first mechanical reaper.

Female bowl-bearers are well-recognized in the Yoruba figure-carving tradition. Known as *olumeye*, 'one who knows honor,' they hold offering bowls whose prominent bird iconography references the sacrificial rooster, a symbol of prosperity. The bowls of *olumeye* are used to hold kola nuts as an offering of social hospitality or as receptacles for the sixteen sacred palm nuts used in divination. The figure offered here differs markedly from others in its class due to its standing posture. *Olumeye* are typically carved in a kneeling position, reflecting a spirit of devotion.

This straight-backed cup-bearer shows strong, stout limbs and a sure stance, with feet solidly planted. Close between projecting breasts it holds a cylindrical vessel topped with a small bird figure. Its large head is supported by a relatively slender neck and is crowned with a high, blue-pigmented crest coiffure that contrasts beautifully with the warm brown wood of the body. Abundant details are worked into the figure, with relief-carved adornments to the head, neck, wrists, waist, and ankles, including a prominent pair of rod-shaped earplugs. The figure is wearing a lip plug, an indicator that this is an early carving. Lip plugs were often seen as a symbol of beauty, status, and cultural identity. The size and shape of the lip plug could vary between ethnic groups, and it often signified the wearer's age, marital status, or social standing.







9

DOLL

ESKIMO PEOPLE, ALASKA

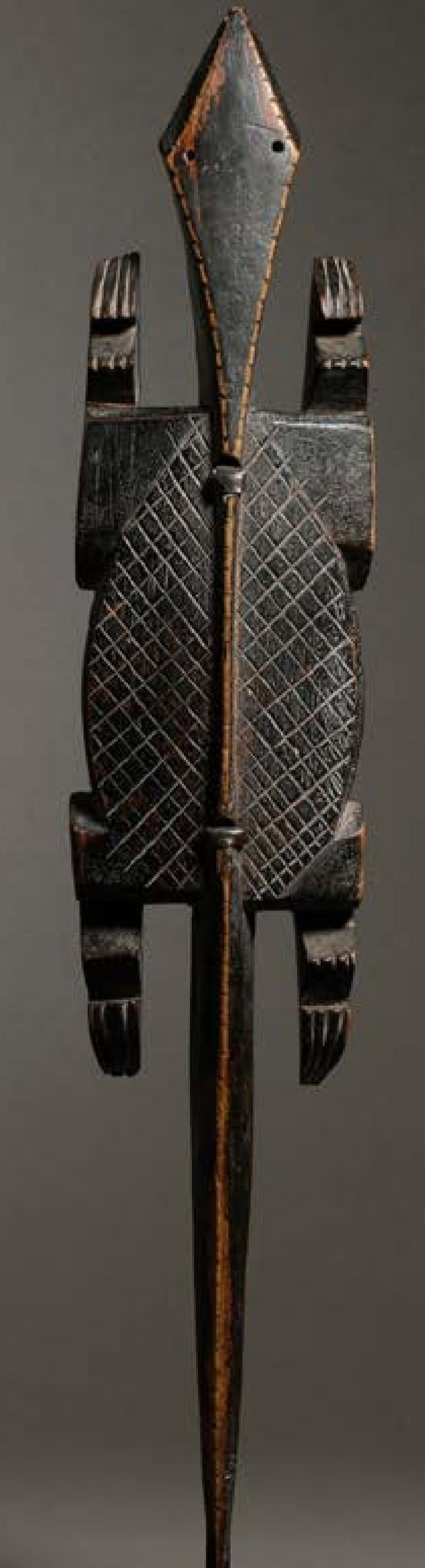
19th century
Marine ivory, hide, glass beads
Height: 5 ½ in

PROVENANCE
Private Collection

For more than a millennium, the native peoples of Alaska have crafted human figures out of a range of organic and manufactured materials. They were often the playthings of children and were used to teach cultural and survival skills, such as skin preparation and sewing. As such, old and authentic examples provide excellent insight into the typical garb of indigenous Alaskan peoples. Yup'ik dolls were often distinguished anatomically, and the addition of ivory labrets for males and chin tattooing for females made them easily identifiable. They were often made in family sets of five – mother, father, daughter, son, and child.

Some human figures were historically used by shamans, though information about such practices is scant and these traditions are not well understood. Ancient Alaskan figures, fashioned of ivory and bone, are schematic and effigy-like in construction, and it is unclear whether the articulated, dressed, and even coiffured dolls of more recent centuries represent an unbroken evolution from those earlier forms of image-making or rather an entirely different cultural expression.

This doll has a vigorous posture and and crescent-shaped eyes and mouth set in a bald head. Its complete clothing ensemble is of hand-sewn hide and fur, adorned with glass bead detailing around the chest and shoulders of the parka.



10

DOOR LOCK

BAMBARA, MALI

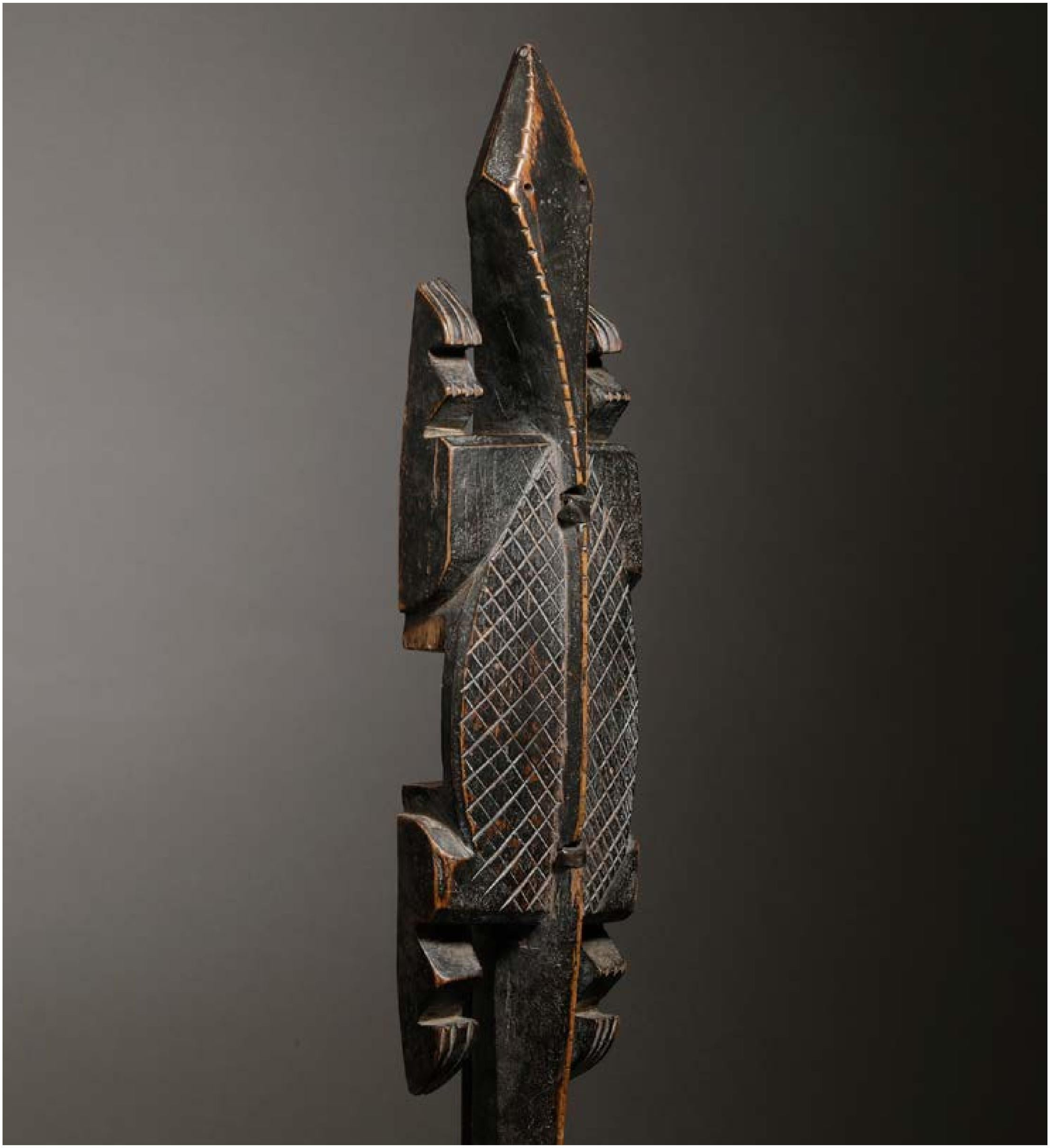
First half 20th century
Wood, metal
Height: 25 in

PROVENANCE

Acquired from a Paris gallery in the 1980's

Until the mid-twentieth century, the doors of Bambara houses were closed with elaborately carved locks depicting human and animal figures. They consisted of two elements: a vertical casing, which was the prime object of the carver's focus, and a large crosspiece or bolt that secured the lock. The forms these locks took reflected local religious beliefs and legends, and they were often incised with magical designs that made the dwelling proof against harmful intrusion both physical and spiritual. One of their primary metaphysical functions was the control of Nyale, a divine creative and generative force that would sow chaos if not properly managed.

This handsome lock shows a zoomorphic form likely representing a reptile such as a turtle or crocodile. It is carved with great clarity of design and displays a lovely balance in both weight and proportion. Its geometric features are poised in robust symmetry, with a sense of rugged physical strength in its angled and folded limbs. Notched incisions around the perimeter of the oversized, diamond-shaped head converge at the spine, lending textural embellishment that emphasizes the natural erosion of the wood.



11

BEER VESSEL *UKHAMBA*

ZULU PEOPLE, SOUTH AFRICA

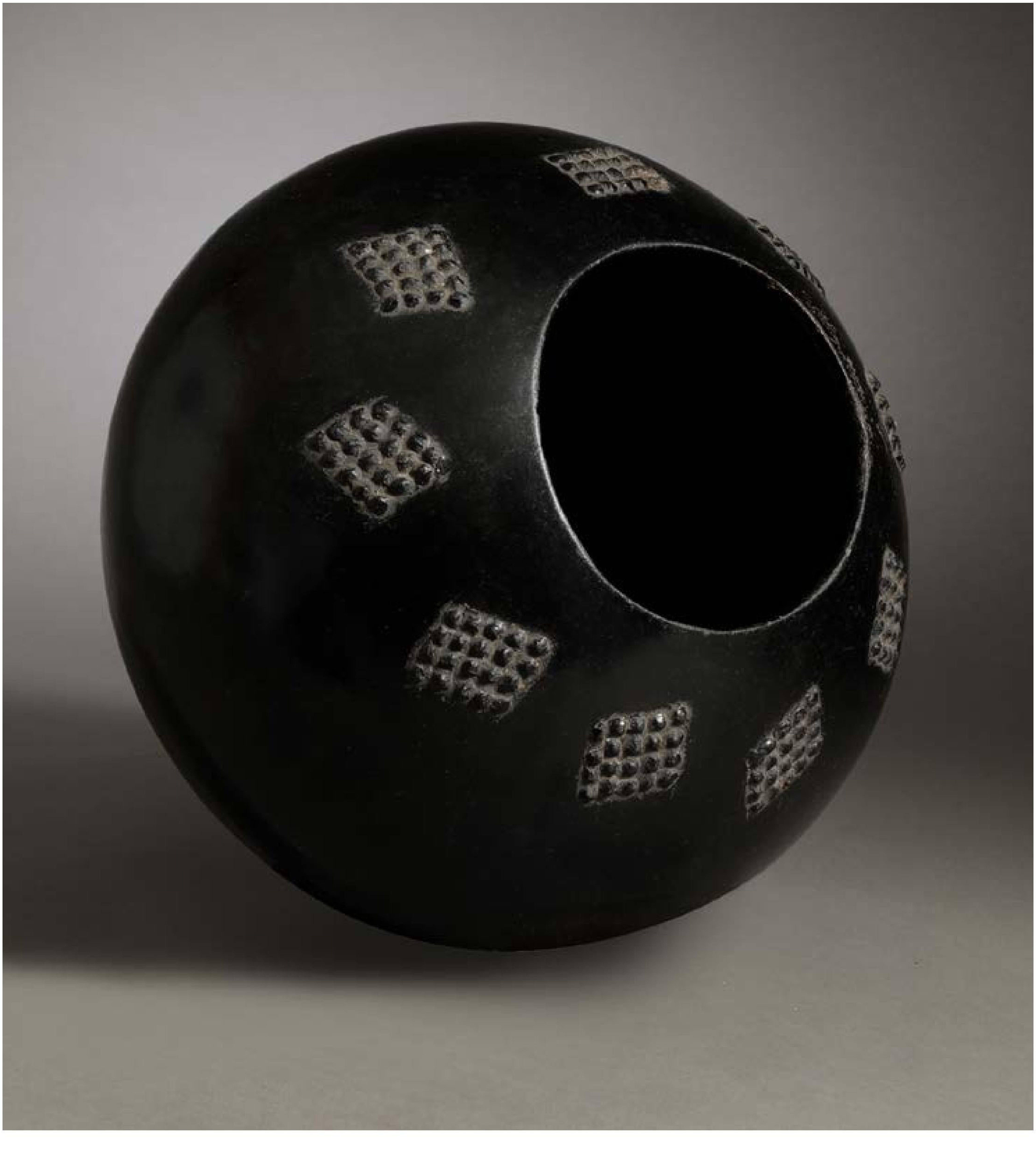
20th century
Low-fired earthenware clay with a burnished surface
Height: 11 ¼ in

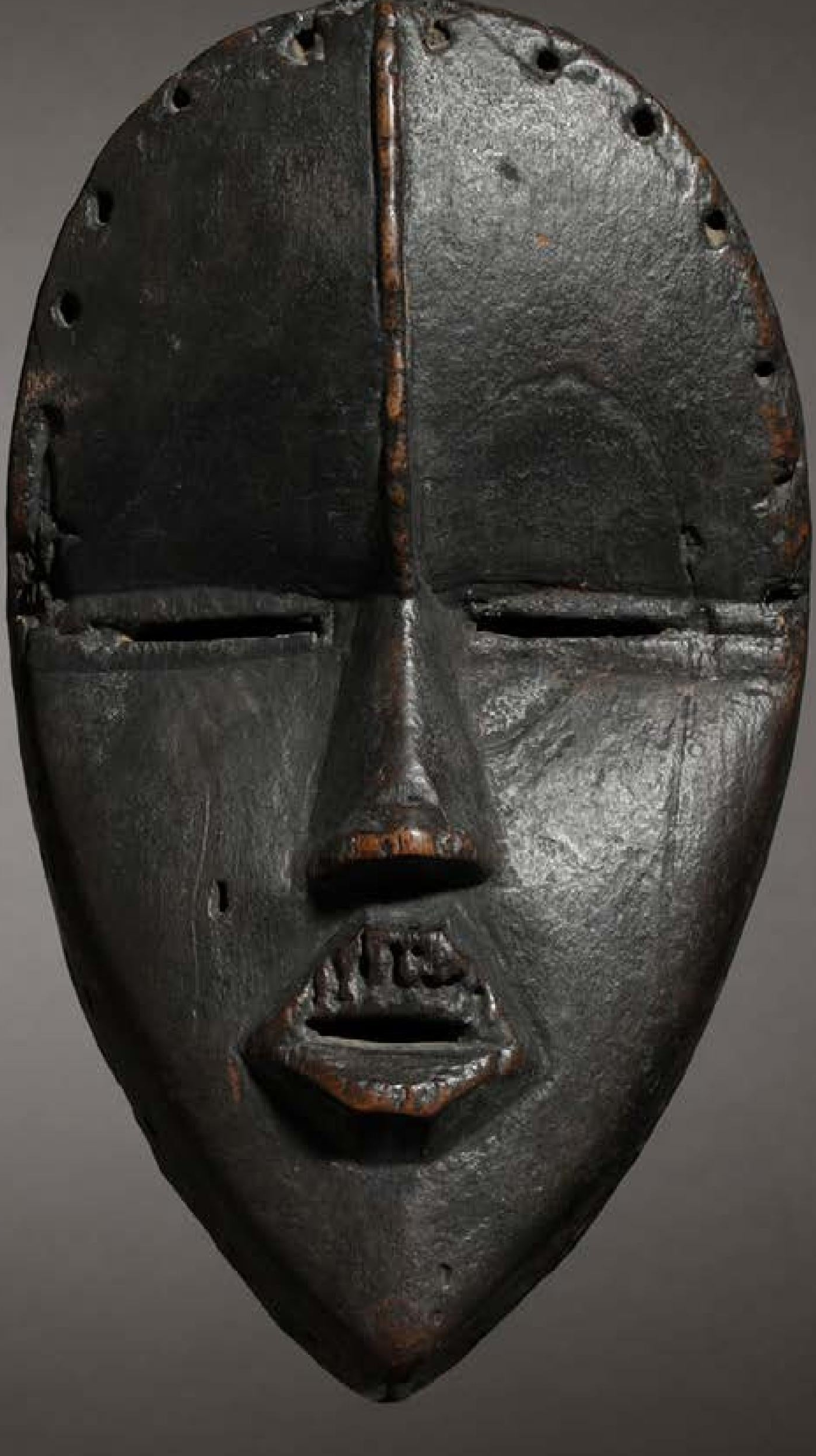
PROVENANCE
Bill Simmons Collection, Mexico
Collected in Qudeni, KwaZulu-Natal by Dave Roberts.

Zulu women traditionally brewed beer (*utshwala*) from sorghum. After being cooked and fermented in a large clay vessel, the final product was filtered through a grass sieve and served in an *ukhamba,* or beer pot. *Ukhamba* are shaped with the coil method, then smoothed, incised, indented, or embossed with geometric patterns, and finally fired, which hardens the clay and darkens its surface.

This *ukhamba* boasts a lustrous black finish that is punctuated by a group of roughly diamond-shaped patches of *amasumpa* motifs encircling the uppermost portion of the vessel. Embellishment of pots in this way was decorative, but also a matter of utility, providing the holder a firm grip.

For the Zulu people, brewing and drinking beer encompassed more than mundane considerations. The sharing of beer played a central role in familial ceremonies and community life. It was offered to the spirits of the ancestors, who were always close at hand and whose goodwill it was important to nurture. For a successful brew, 'living water' would be sourced from a running stream, spring, or just below a waterfall to ensure the involvement of the ancestors in the entire process and product.





12

DAN MASK

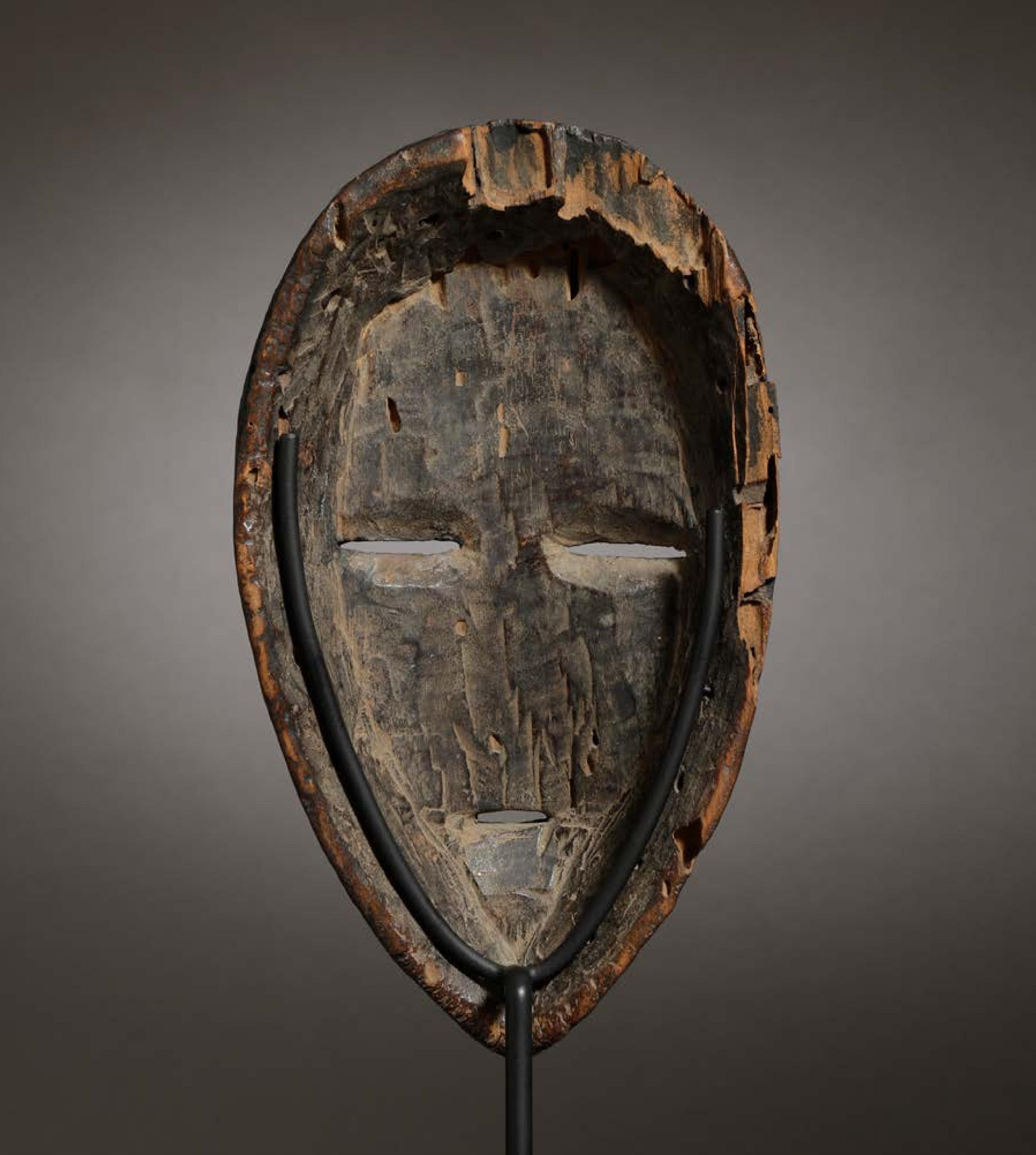
Late 19th/early 20th century
Wood
Height: 9 in

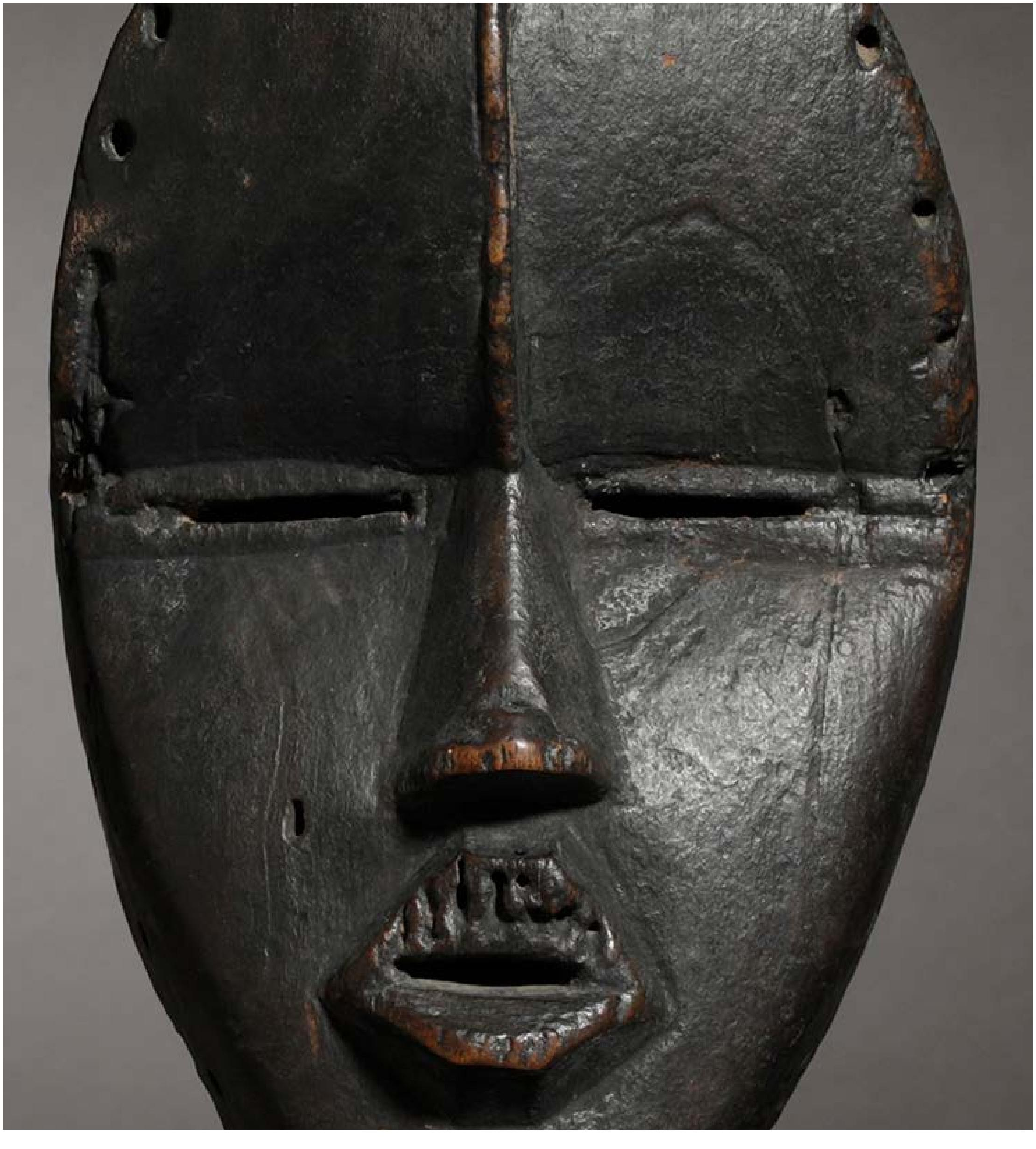
PROVENANCE
Karob Collection, Boston, MA

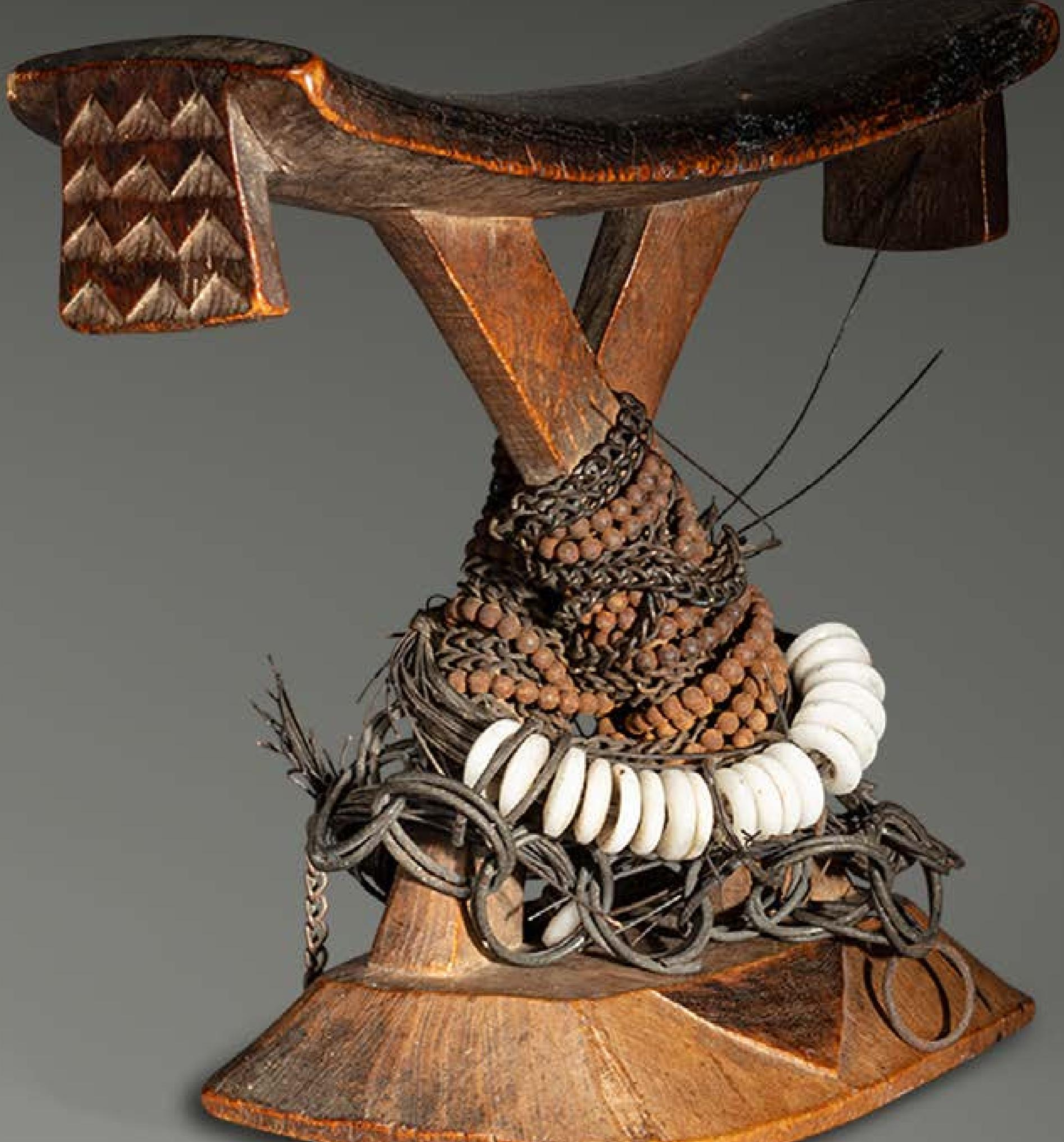
Dan masks are embodiments of gle or ge, spirits who wish to communicate with and aid human communities but who lack a physical form. Materialized in dream-inspired masks, they attain their desires through the medium of masquerade. The mask presented here is of an iconic type referred to as dean gle. It is host to a benevolent spirit that seeks to teach and nurture, supporting peaceful activities in the village. Dean gle is technically genderless, though its qualities of idealized beauty and gracious beneficence are often thought of as feminine by both the Dan and outsiders.

This example demonstrates the classic dean gle composition, with an oval face tapering down to a narrow chin, slit eyes horizontally bisecting the face within a lateral depression, and a slightly open mouth with full lips. A vertical ridge in the center of the brow reflects a historical tattoo practice among the Dan of Liberia. Around the perimeter of the forehead is pierced a row of holes by which a coiffure of fiber or shells would have been affixed.

Some loss to the rear right side of the mask. Small repair to left eye. Comes with a custom base.







13

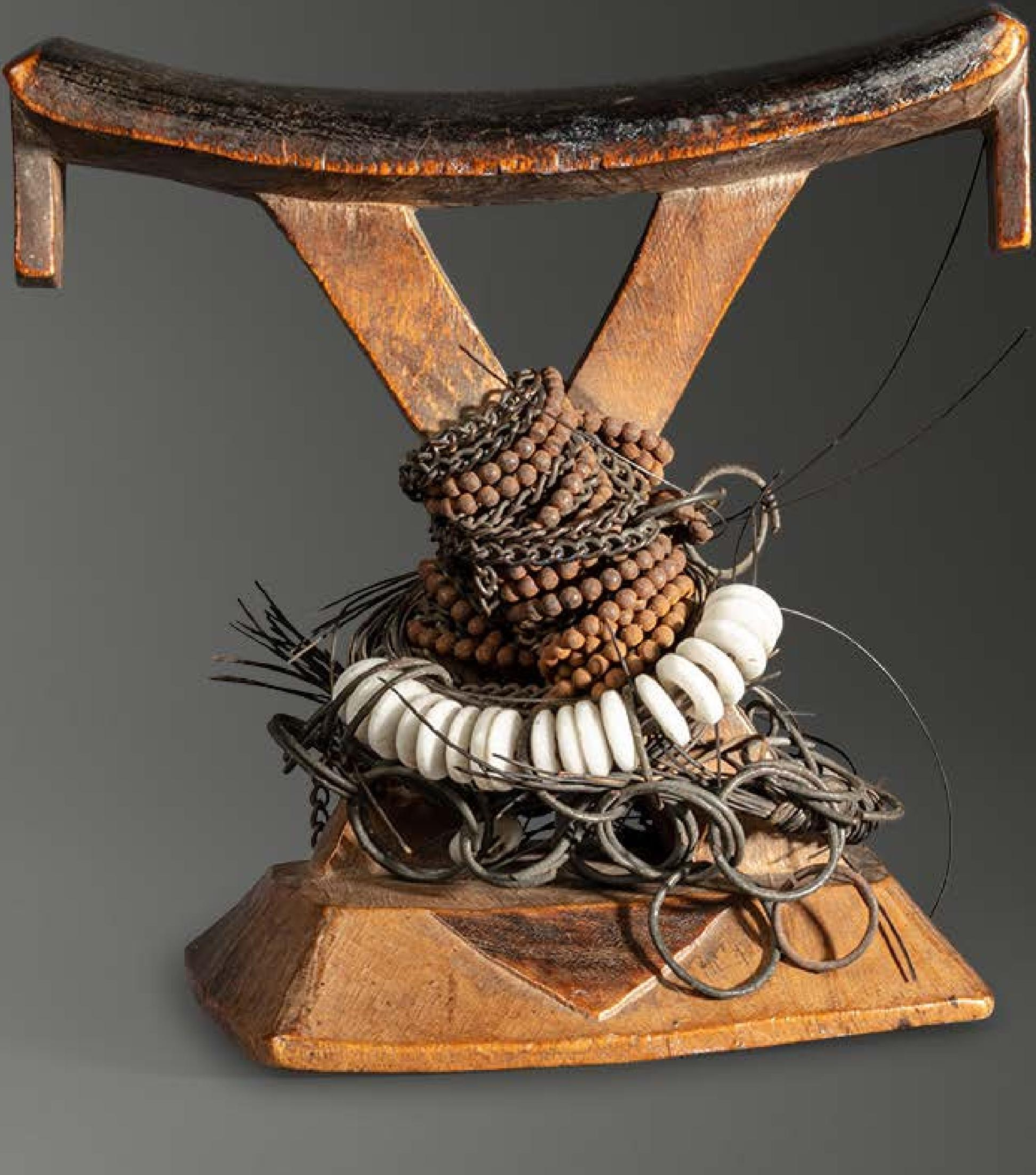
HEADREST : XIKHIGELO

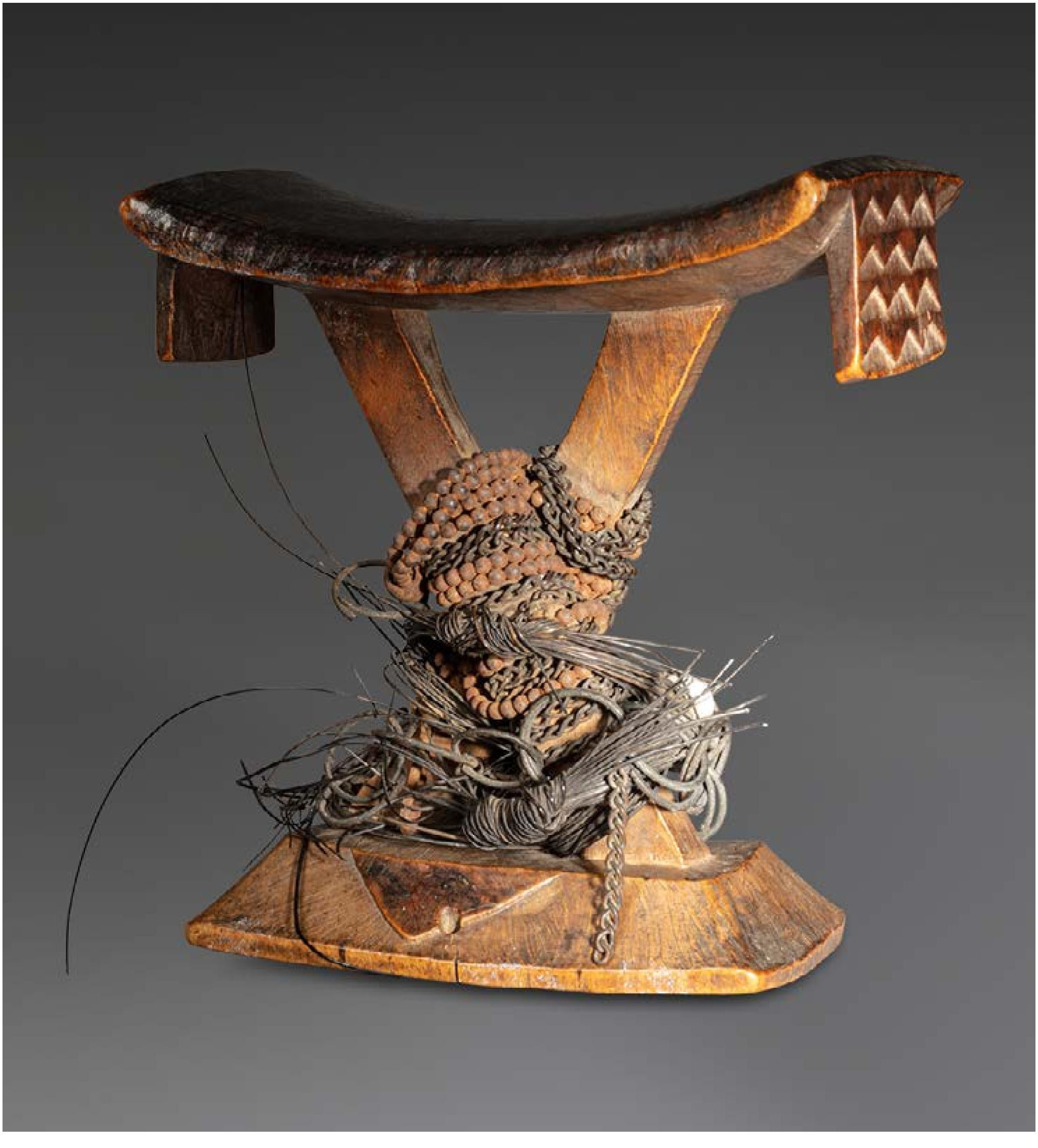
ZIMBABWE/MOZAMBIQUE/SOUTH AFRICA

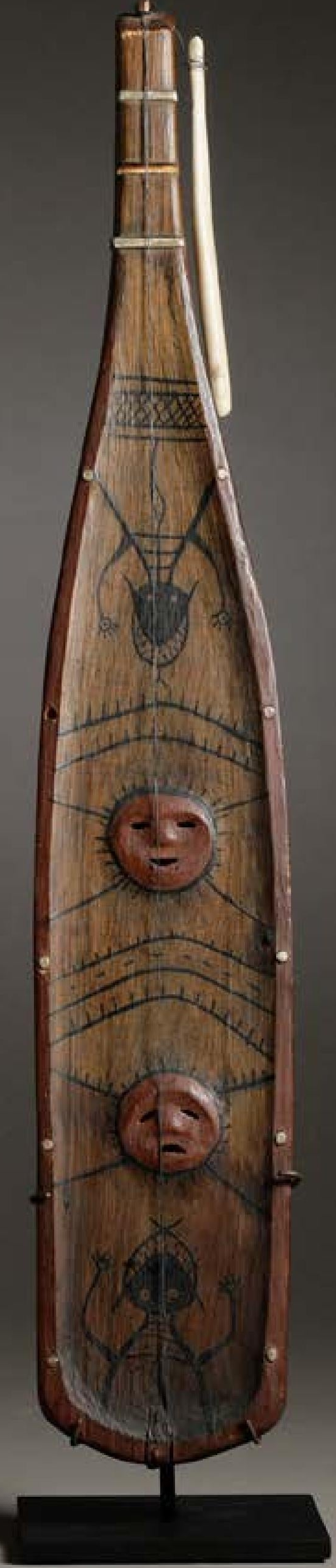
19th century
Wood, metal, glass, fibre, elephant- and wildebeest tail hair
Height 5.35 x Width 5.62 x Depth 2.63 ins (13.6 x 14.3 x 6.7 cm)

PROVENANCE
Michael Graham-Stewart, London, United Kingdom
Karel Nel Collection, South Africa

Outstanding not only for its elegant torqued and crossed struts forming the support for its sleeping surface and for the finely carved rows of zigzags on its two lugs, this ‘dressed’ headrest is also an extremely rare example that has retained the embellishments added by its original owners. These additions are not merely decorative but add power to the object. Twisted and bound around its middle are three types of metal chain – a finely linked rusted industrial ball-chain whose surface has oxidized to a reddish hue, a chain of small dark metal links, and a circlet of handmade chain with large circular loops. White glass buttons, threaded together on elephant hair, are draped across the one side. The rectangular chamfered base is twisted at a slight angle to the sleeping platform, an aspect of the design that is most unusual and possibly a result of the torquing of the wood as it dried. The base includes a low relief triangle darkened with poker work at the center of both front and back. As the raised, central triangle is considered a distinctive feature of Shona headrests, and the lugs typical of a Tsonga style, this headrest demonstrates how classificatory boundaries drawn along clear stylistic lines need further consideration.







14

FIDDLE OR LUTE *QELUTVIAQ*

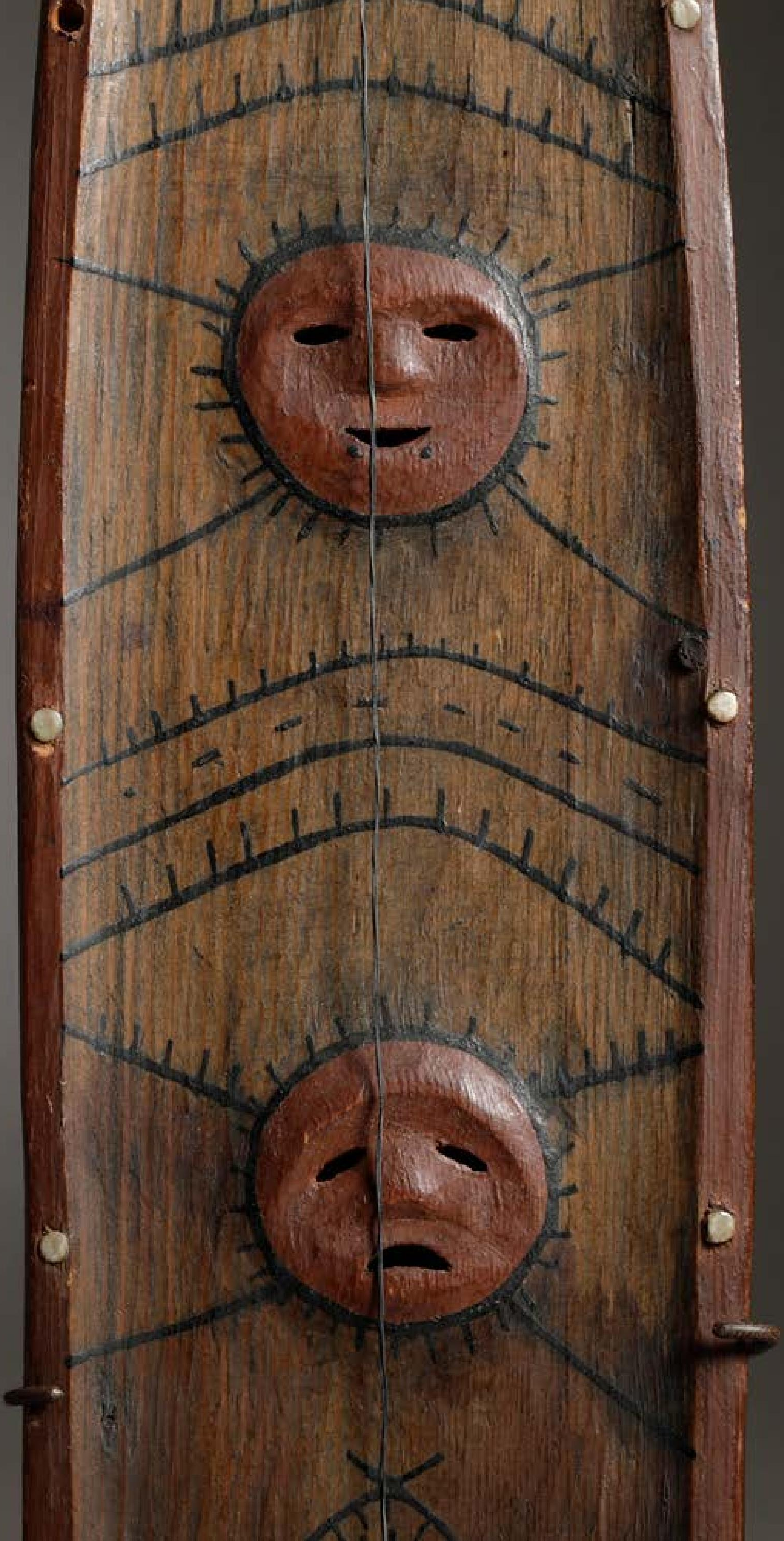
YU’PIK PEOPLES, ALASKA

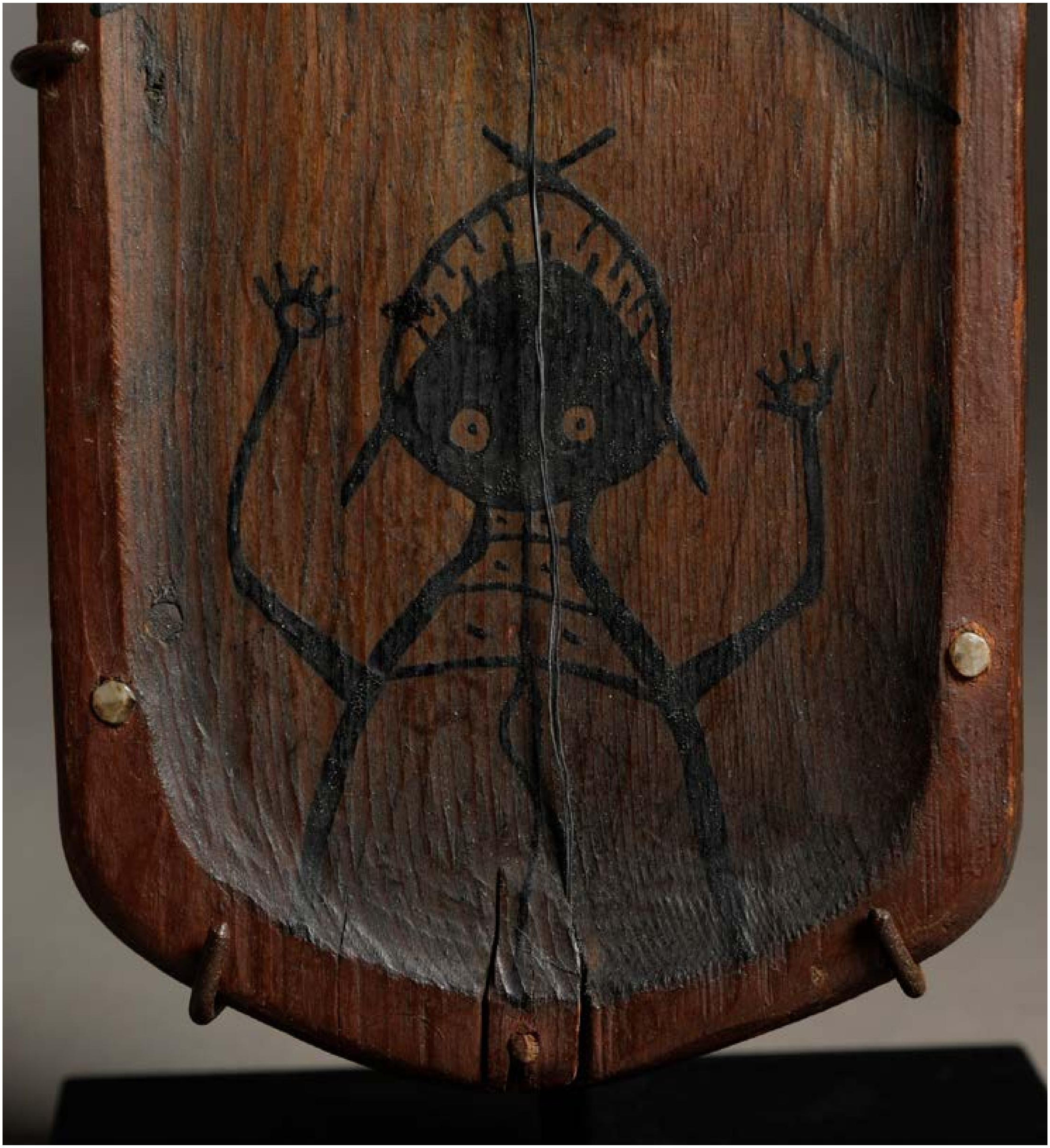
19th century
Wood, paint, string, bone bow
Height: 20 in

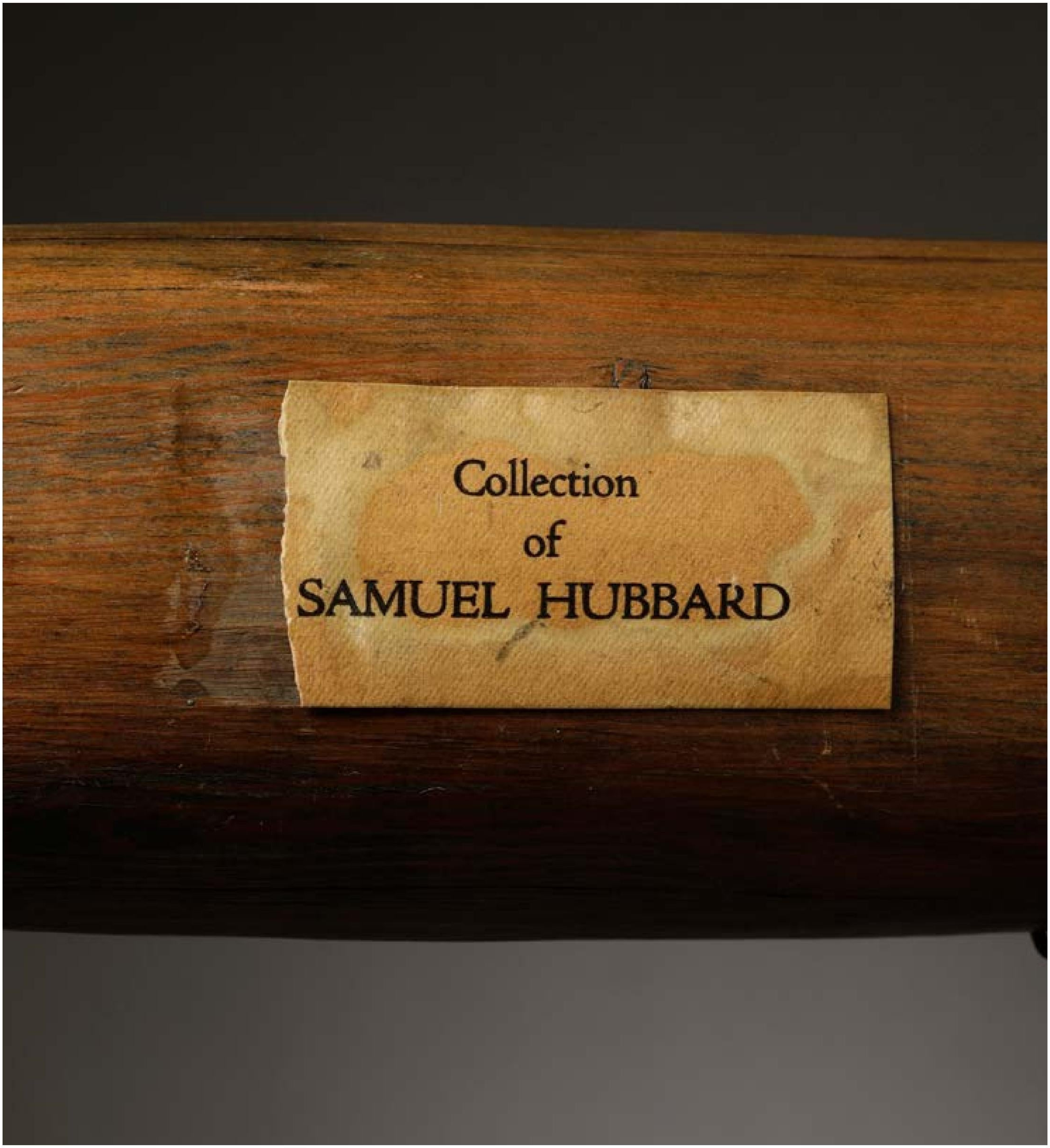
PROVENANCE
Samuel Hubbard Collection
Private Collection

The *qelutviaq* (or *kelutviaq*) is a single-stringed lute or fiddle played by the Yup’ik people of Nelson Island and southwest Alaska. White or black spruce root (*negavgun*) is used to string the *qelutviaq*. This instrument reflects the centuries of cultural exchange that occurred between the indigenous peoples of the Siberian and Alaskan Arctic and visitors from Russia and elsewhere. From the late eighteenth century, music was an important social tool that eased the tension of language barriers between these various groups. Unlike a European-style instrument, the *gelutviaq* cannot be tuned, suggesting that it was not intended to produce complicated or precise melodies. Instead, it was likely used to provide backing drones or rhythmic, tonal punctuations to singing.

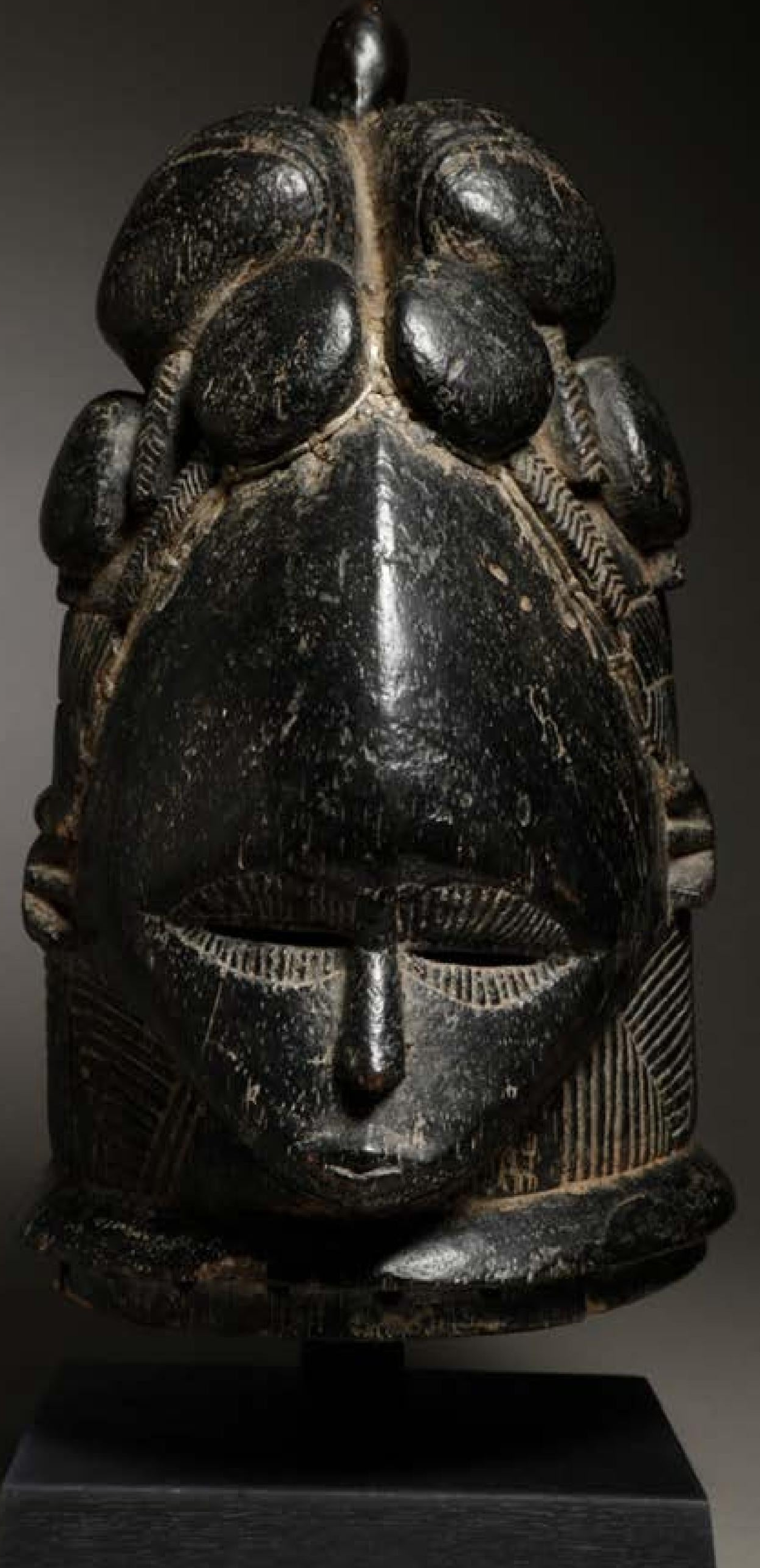
This richly decorated example shows lively designs on the face of its soundbox, with painted mythical spirit creatures and mask-like roundels carved in relief that act as the sound hole. A similar example in the Smithsonian Museum is identified as originating from the Kuskokwim River region in southwest Alaska.







Collection
of
SAMUEL HUBBARD



15

HELMET MASK

GOLA, SIERRA LEONE

Early 20th century
Wood, patina
Height: 15 in

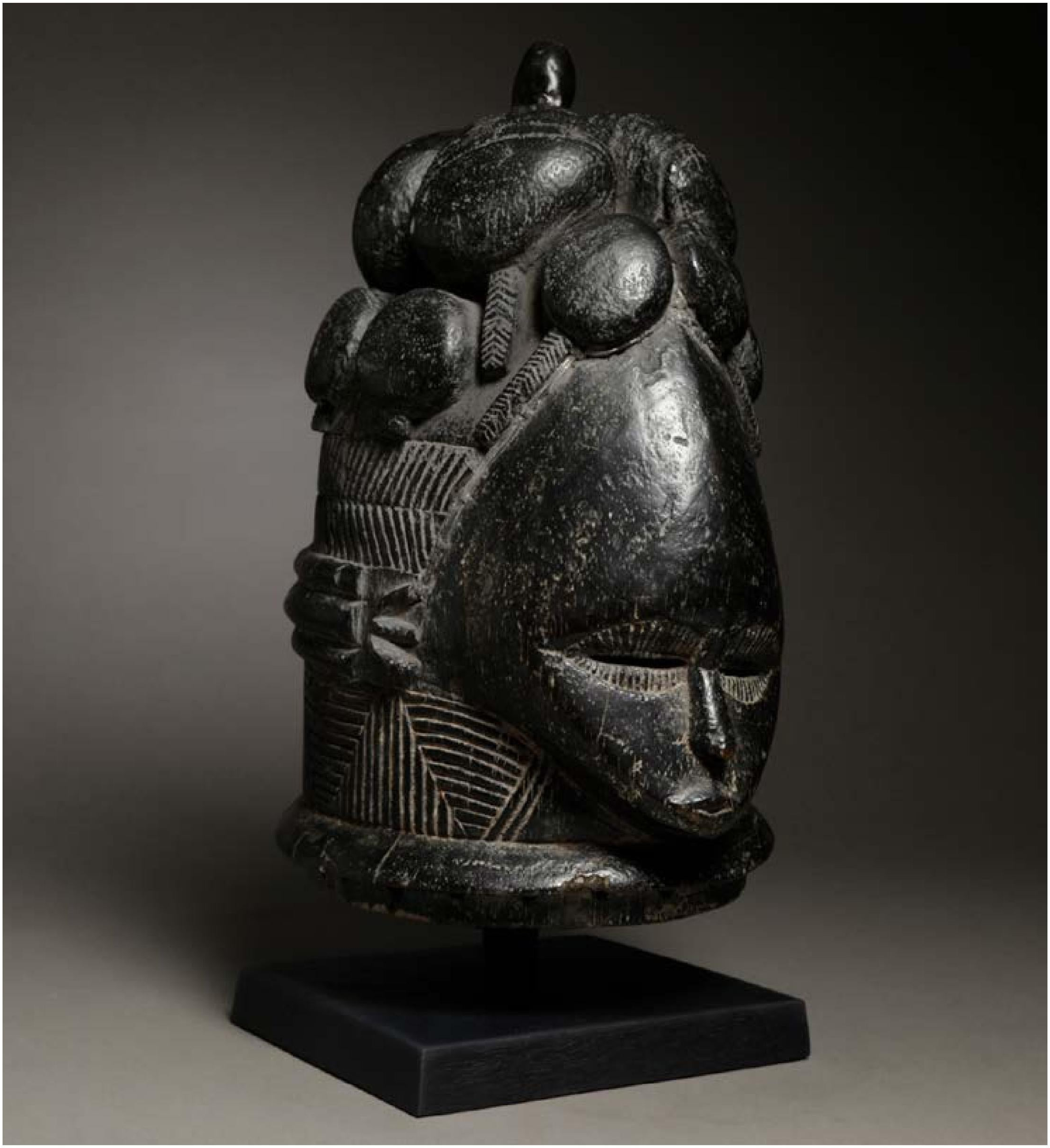
PROVENANCE

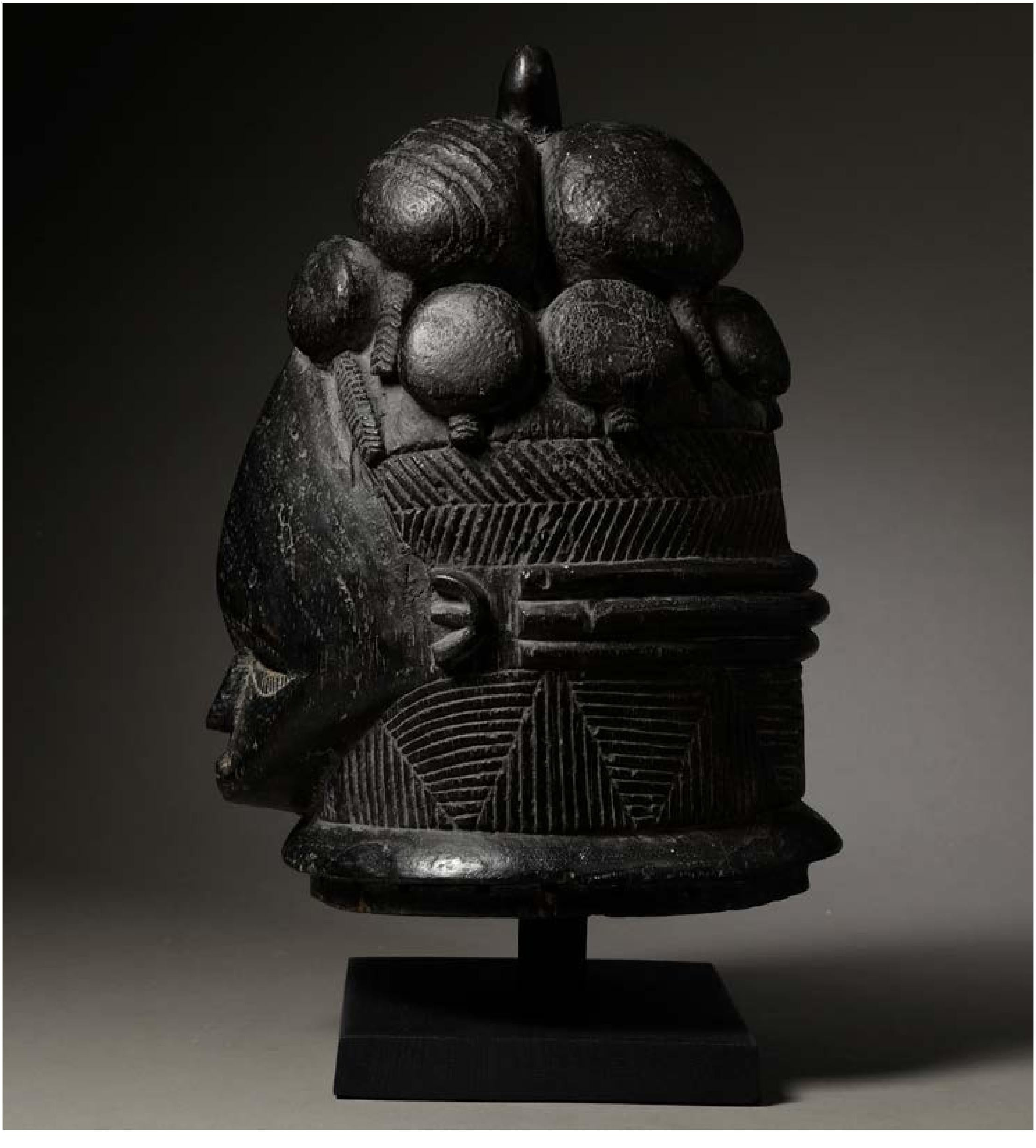
Constance McCormick Fearing (1926–2019), Montecito, California. McCormick Fearing was an heiress to the McCormick fortune. Her family founded the McCormick Harvesting Machine Company, which later became part of the International Harvester Company. Cyrus McCormick was credited as the inventor of the first mechanical reaper.

The Sande women's society and its men's counterpart, Poro, are powerful social forces across Sierra Leone and Liberia. Both govern the initiation of adolescents into adulthood and instill the observance of behavioral norms that shape the daily lives of the Gola and their neighbors.

Sande masks are the only wooden masks in sub-Saharan Africa made for and performed by women. They may be commissioned by a ranking Sande member, usually after she has been visited by a spirit in a dream. Initiation and funerary rites for women are the primary contexts in which they are danced, and their design and performance are the subject of friendly competition among Sande members.

The detailed and fantastically conceived coiffure of this helmet mask (*ndoli*) crowns a smooth, youthful visage with an expansive brow and projecting angular facial features. The organic mass of rounded protuberances that surmount the mask contrasts powerfully with the extensive panels of tight geometric line work that wrap around the head and neck. The exuberant embrace of simple shapes and bold surface design shows a somewhat higher degree of abstraction in this mask than typically seen in *ndoli*.





16

KNIFE *BAKATWA*

SHONA, ZIMBABWE

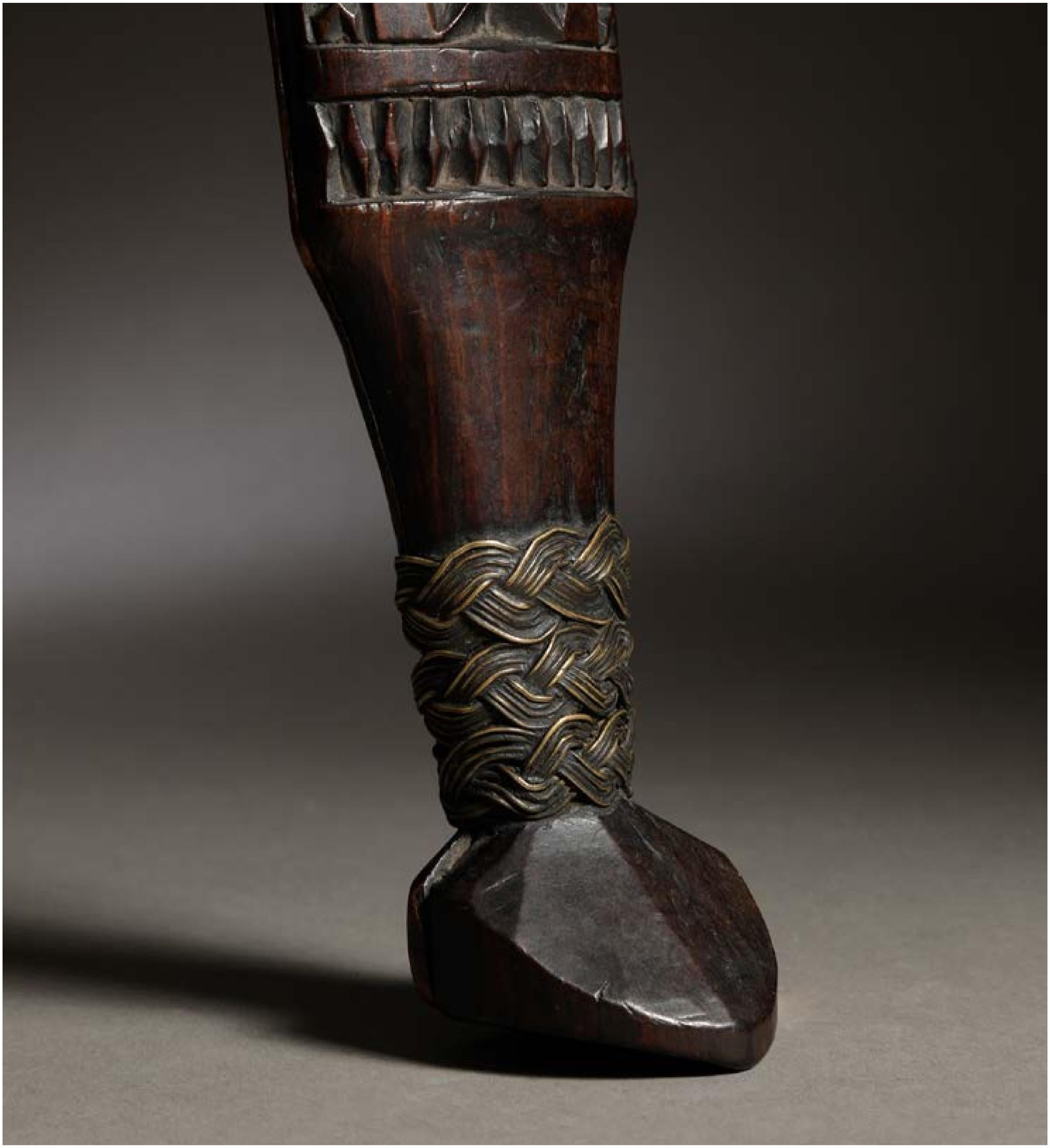
Early 20th century
Iron, wood, brass
Height: 19 in

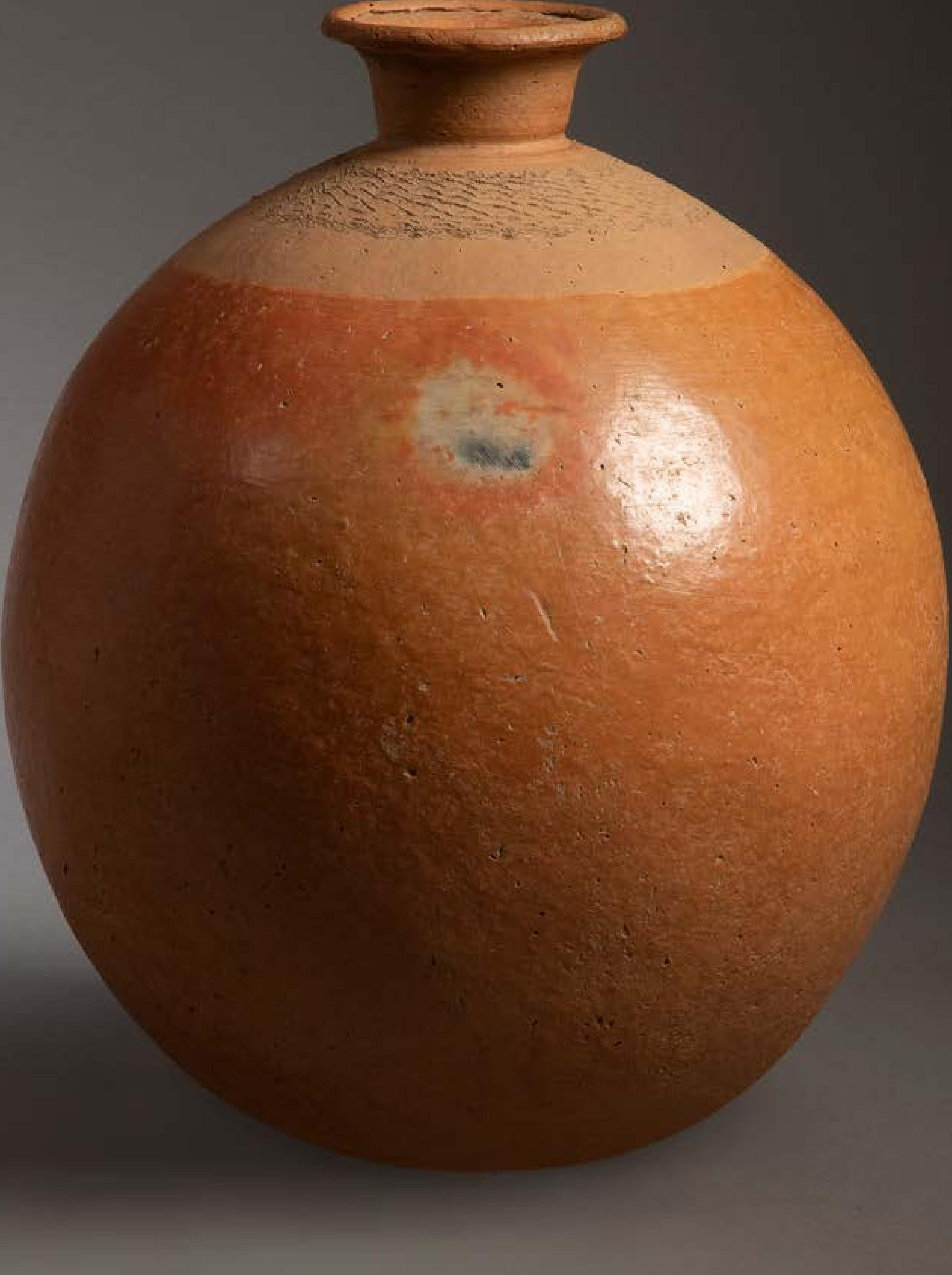
PROVENANCE
Private Collector, USA
Joe Loux, San Francisco

In historical times, all Shona men carried a knife or sword of some kind, for use in self-defense and hunting. The ceremonial *bakatwa* can be distinguished from everyday Shona blades (known as *banga*) because of its double-edged form and the intricate woven brass wire decoration on the hilt. This weapon was accorded a high level of prestige in traditional Shona religious practice.

Bakatwa were and are passed down from generation to generation in a lineage and were used in religious rituals to symbolize the presence of the owner's ancestors, the sword's previous owners. In these rituals, the owner addressed the *bakatwa* as if it was the physical embodiment of his ancestors. This link between the spirits and these swords also meant that *n'angas* (diviner-healers) and *svikiros* (spirit-mediums) carried them as the insignia of their profession. Certain Shona hunters were traditionally believed to be under the spiritual influence and guidance of deceased hunters, known as *shave* spirits, so they also carried *bakatwa* as a symbol of their spirit ally.

The traditional carrying of plainer, more functional swords as everyday weapons dwindled under the influence of Christian missionaries. The Government also launched drives to prevent men travelling armed during the civil unrest of the 1970s. This meant that knives and swords were largely restricted to ceremonial use. However, *bakatwa* have enjoyed something of a renaissance in recent years, as symbols of traditional cultural identity and Zimbabwean independence from British imperialism. Some recent examples of *bakatwa* have even been forged to resemble AK-47 machine-guns, with the blade sheathed inside the gun's barrel. (cf Pitt Rivers Museum, *Bakatwa*).





17

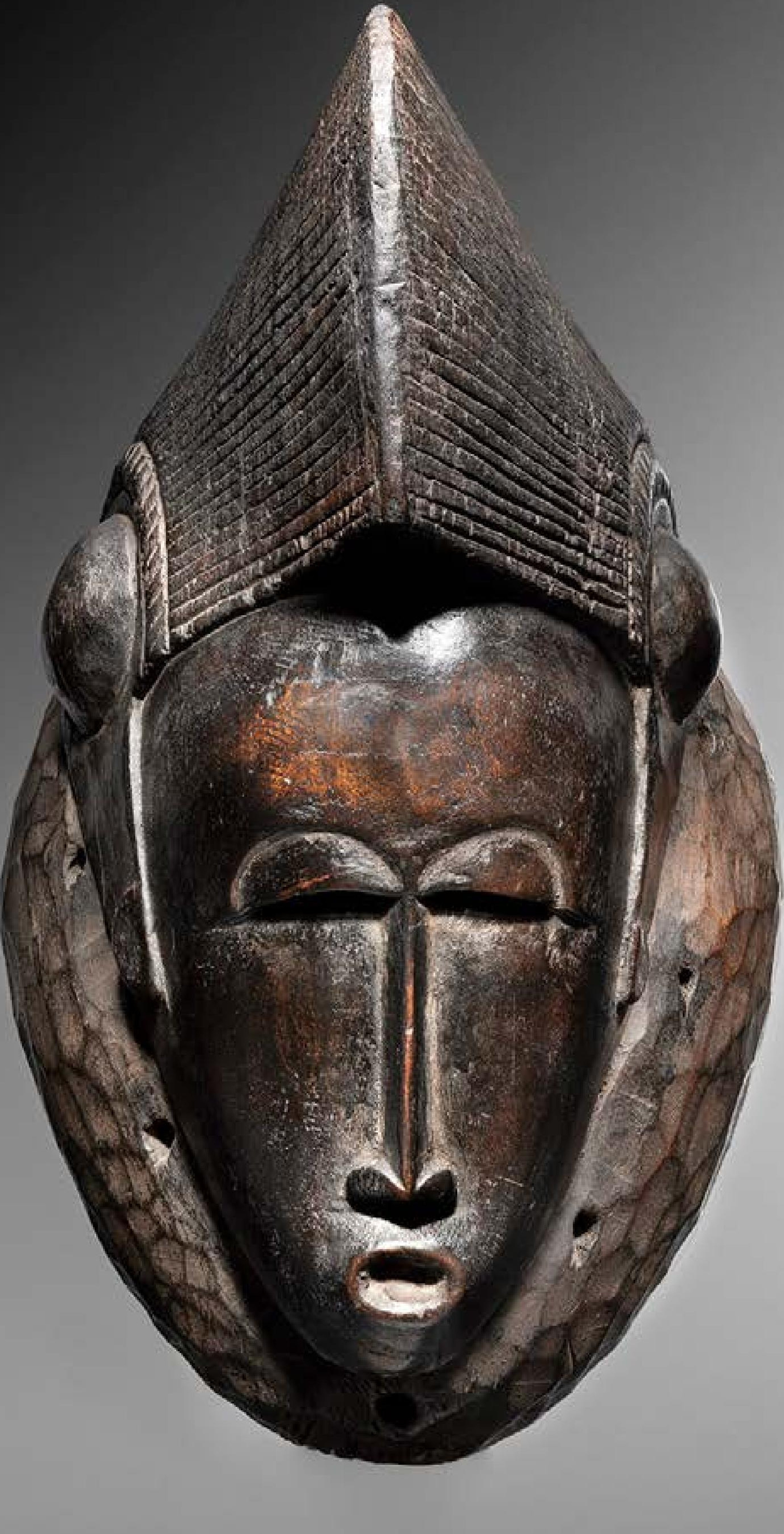
WATER VESSEL

FULANI, NIGER

20th century
Earthenware clay with burnished surface
Height: 17 in; Diameter: 13 in (43 cm x 33 cm)

PROVENANCE
Oussien Issa, 1998
Bill Simmons, Mexico

Earthen water jars such as this Fulani vessel have been crafted for untold millennia, their archetypal form one of humanity's most fundamental artistic ideas. Some of their uses have changed over the span of centuries, but some remain, including the most ancient of all: the storing of water. This water jar, with its full, egg-shaped form, bright ochre color and decorated with two scorch marks could very well closely resemble one made by a Fulani potter countless generations ago. Its beauty and qualities are simply timeless.



18

MASK

BAULE, IVORY COAST

Early 20th century
Wood
Height: 14 in

PROVENANCE

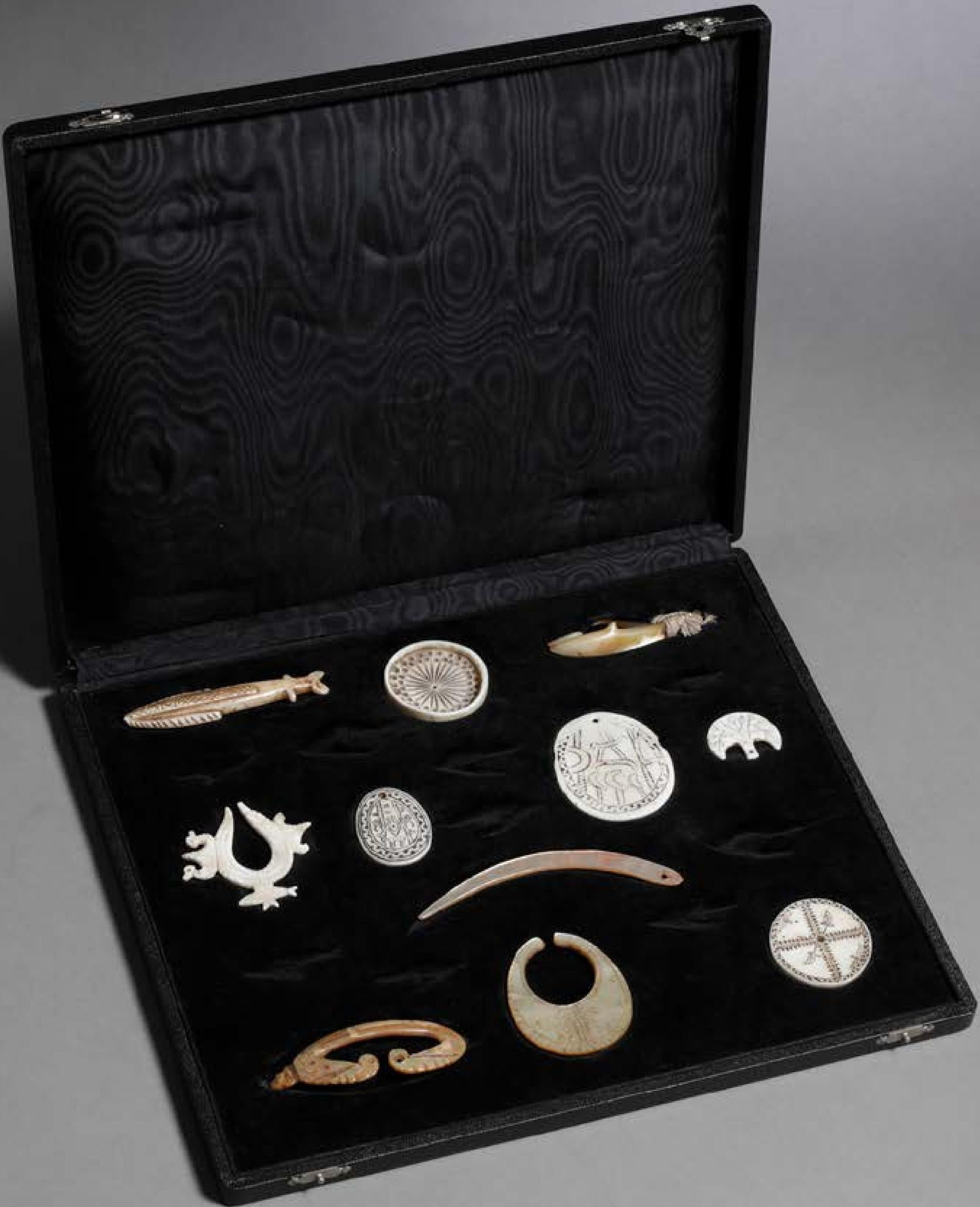
Faith-Dorian and Martin Wright, New York
Galerie Lucas Ratton, Paris, France
Private Collection, USA

EXHIBITION HISTORY

Maastricht, The Netherlands: 'TEFAF, The European Fine Art Fair', MECC-Maastrichts Expositie & Congres Centrum, 7–15 March 2020 (Lucas Ratton)
Private European Collection

Part of the Akan language group, the Baule settled in the Ivory Coast more than two centuries ago and assimilated prominent masking rites from their neighbors – the Guro, Senufo and Yaure peoples – into their own traditions. Masks are held to be one of their most ancient and fundamental art forms. A primary dance of rejoicing called *goli*, which symbolizes the social order, is the source of the most iconic Baule masks. These are *kpan,* representing the senior female in the dance and carved with elaborate coiffures; *ndoma*, idealized portrait-masks of distinguished community members; and *kple*, abstract, animalistic masks that depict the junior male.

This fine mask is likely a *kpan* type, featuring a dramatic, crest-shaped coiffure with bosses on either side of the head. The elongated face is carved in classic style, with semicircular, hooded eyes; a long, narrow nose, and a small, ovular, open mouth just above the chin. Attachment holes are bored around the backing of the mask, through which cord or fiber would have affixed the mask to a dance costume.



19

COLLECTION OF FACIAL ORNAMENTS IN ORIGINAL DISPLAY CASE

SOLOMON ISLANDS

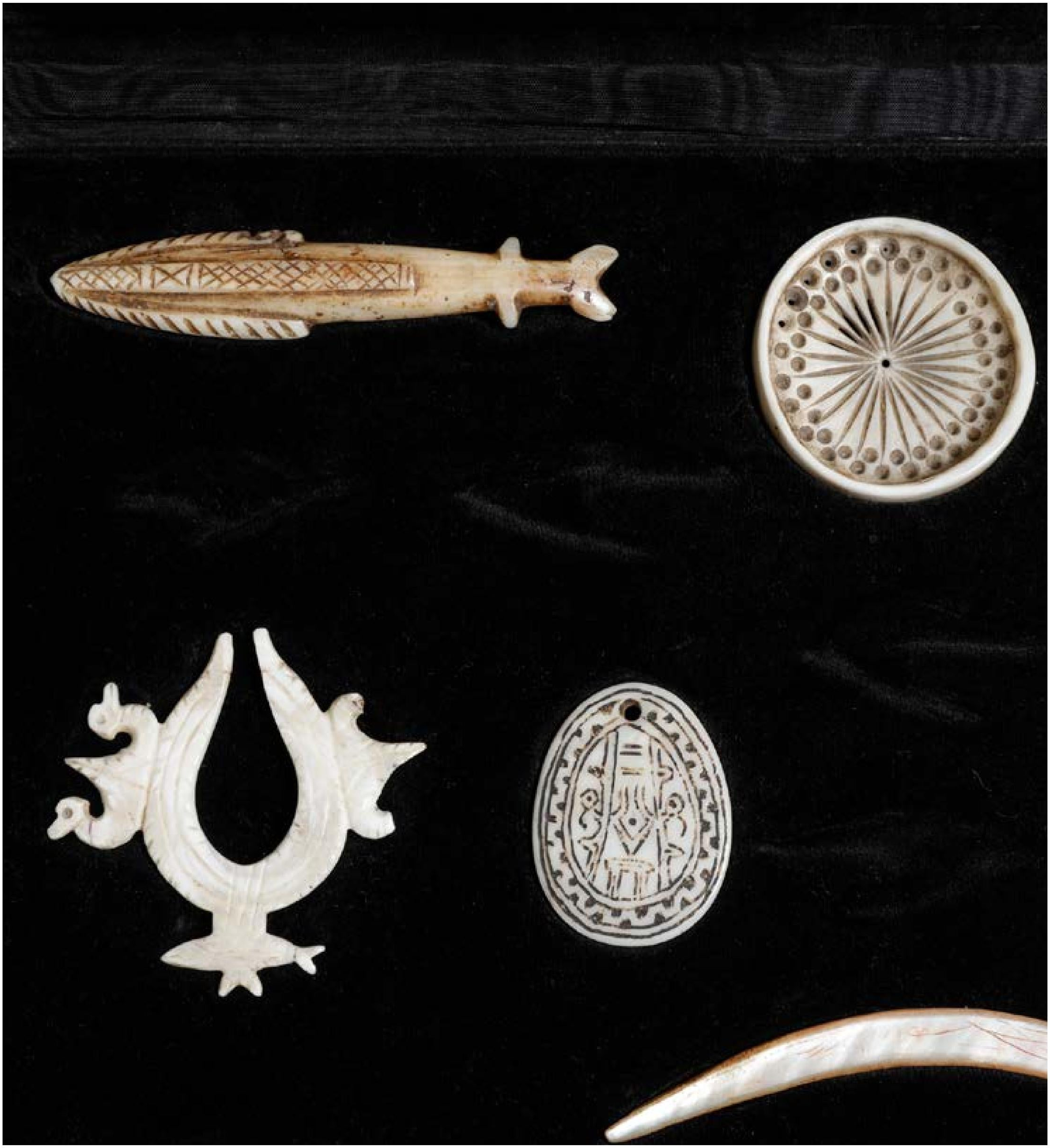
Top row left – fish hook (barb missing)
Top row right – fish hook
Top row middle – ear plug (*Ulawa*)
Middle row left – nose ornament
Middle row second and third from left – etched pendant
Middle row right – etched pendant
Middle row center – pin
Bottom row left – ear ornament
Bottom row middle – nose ornament
Bottom row right – pendant
All late 19th century
Shell

PROVENANCE

Faith-dorian and Martin Wright Collection

The Solomon Islands, an archipelago that rests between New Britain and Vanuatu in the south Pacific, is renowned for its remarkable decorative arts. Solomon Islands artists make detailed ornaments to adorn the human body and embellish ceremonial and utilitarian objects, working with wood but also extensively with shells, porpoise teeth, and other materials. Mother-of-pearl, giant clams (tridacna), and turtles are the primary sources of shells for jewelry and ornaments, chosen for their beauty and resilience.

This group of objects represents a diverse range of carved ornaments and utilitarian implements that were worn and used by Solomon Islands peoples, encompassing fishing lures, nose and ear ornaments, and pendants. While all show a refined control of their medium, the pendants (*ulute* or *papfita*) and ear plug (*ulawa*) made from the whitish tridacna shell demonstrate the well-known penchant for detailed design in the Solomon Islands tradition, with extensive geometric and organic motifs incised in their surfaces. Piscine and avian imagery are abundant in the art of this region, with the frigate bird holding special symbolism of strength and protection. Such motifs are found in a number of these objects, in varying degrees of abstraction.



COLLECTION OF FACIAL ORNAMENTS IN ORIGINAL DISPLAY CASE

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